



# THE WHITEBOY

BY

MRS. C. HALL.



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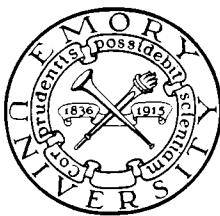
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# THE WHITEBOY:

A STORY OF IRELAND.

BY MRS S. C. HALL.

“A Country ever hardly used!”

*Fourth Edition.*

LONDON:  
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## INTRODUCTION TO “THE WHITEBOY.”

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THOSE who read this Book are entreated to bear in mind that it was written several years ago, and that it has reference to the state of Ireland between thirty and forty years back.

Things have been very greatly changed since then : happily a large proportion of the evils dwelt upon are now only matters of History : the “Middlemen”—sources of incalculable miseries—have almost entirely disappeared : easy and frequent intercourse between the “sister countries” has dispelled many prejudices : England has learned to treat Ireland, not alone with justice, but with sympathy : various circumstances have combined to render “the bit of land” no longer an object of perpetual death-struggle : the landlord has grown more considerate, and the labourer better contented—because better encouraged, better treated, and better recompensed ; and it can no longer be deemed a vain hope—the hope which sees in Ireland, at no far off period, the right arm of England : all its vast natural resources developed under the fostering care, and aided by the fertilising capital of the English people—the people of the two countries becoming truly and emphatically ONE.

*January, 1855.*



# THE WHITEBOY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE VOYAGE.

EARLY in the month of June, in the year 1822, one of the first steam-boats that voyaged between England and Ireland, was moving along the narrow Avon. The deck was thronged with passengers, watching and commenting upon the long pennon-like line of smoke, that indicated a head wind ; in spite of which they were told they might reach the Irish coast before the next day's sunset —intelligence that appeared incredible to some, who had been accustomed to many mischances between the ports of Bristol and Cork—“puttings in and puttings back”—while others found it difficult to believe that a voyage hitherto considered an intolerable evil, could be converted into a brief party of pleasure ; its duration, a matter of certainty ; subjected to few annoyances, no peril, and, in reality, less fatigue than the journey would have caused if the two countries were joined by a bridge across St. George's Channel.

The evening was so mild and genial, that the ladies continued to linger on deck long after they had passed the entrance of the picturesque river, and the shores of Wales and Devon were growing dim in the approaching twilight. The passengers, as usual, were divided into small knots ; turning their thoughts to any subject in the hope of avoiding, or at least postponing, the payment of a tax extorted from all who are new to ocean dangers. As the night drew on, the less daring gradually disappeared, the deck became thinner and thinner, and the few who remained, seemed determined to enjoy the invigorating sea-breeze, and the gentle light of the new moon, as far preferable to the close atmosphere and limited space of the over-crowded cabin.

Among them was a lady whose interest was apparently absorbed by the motion of the paddle-wheels, which she appeared to watch intently, as she leaned over the side of the vessel. She was a young widow—the Lady Mary O'Brien—the relict of a distinguished officer, whom she had accompanied to Madeira, hoping its mild climate might arrest the progress of a disease, the seeds

of which had been sown while in honourable service in the Peninsula. The effort was vain ; the attempt only hastened his dissolution ; his body was consigned to the waves before the shores of the health-giving island were reached, and the bereaved wife returned alone to England. England, however, was not her country ; her sojourn there was brief ; she was now proceeding homeward to shelter in her father's house. Lady Mary was accompanied by her brother, a fine youth verging on manhood ; a casual observer might have conjectured that she had another companion also—a gentleman, who, though not a relative, was probably a familiar friend, privileged to stand by her side, and, at times, monopolise her conversation.

“And you think I shall be disappointed in my expectation of Ireland ?” he said, in answer to some observation of the Lady Mary, as she looked suddenly up from the foaming waters.

“Yes,” she replied, “you will be disappointed ; I am sure of that.”

“With the peasantry ?”

“No ; those who rate them very high, are not likely to over-rate them.”

“With the aspect of the country ?”

“Possibly ; but not with its scenic beauty.”

“With society in general ?” continued the gentleman, in the same tone of inquiry.

“I really do not so well know what you expect from ‘Irish society in general,’ as to be able to answer that question. You may ‘expect’ to be vastly amused by the brogue and the blunders. You may ‘expect’ every young lady to be a diverting hoyden, and every gentleman a good shot. You may ‘expect’ wit and starvation to greet your arrival. You may ‘expect’ to find Spencer Court reduced to a heap of ruins by the Whiteboys, who have lately furnished so many ‘daring outrages’ to greedy newspapers. You may ‘expect’ to be called out by a brother because you danced with his sister twice on one evening—without proposing. In your simplicity you may ‘expect’ to find a humane middleman ; a grand jury incapable of jobbing ; land let at a reasonable rent ; but—” and while she paused to laugh, the expression of her face changed from that of the most provoking *espèglerie* to one serious and full of intelligence, “but you are of course aware that two religious and political parties divide the island ; two, born on the same land, yet agreeing in one thing only—the hatred they bear each other.”

“I do hope you are not rightly informed,” said the young Englishman.

“Alas ! I am,” she answered. “We are two nations on one soil ; Celt and Saxon, Roman and Protestant, Irish Irish and English Irish ; in England you do not understand this ; but we do ; perhaps you may—after a time. There may be individual exceptions—I thank God there are, and many ; but the parties hate each other ; and between them, which to cleave to, and

which to shun, you will be speedily called to make election ; be sure of *that*. I have smiled over what you said a few minutes ago—that you intend to live in Ireland, and belong to no party."

Mr. Spencer drew a seat close to that of the Lady Mary, and assumed the look of a man determined to record his resolve and assign his reasons for it.

But the lady was in no mood to listen. "No," she said, "I have already heard enough ; you are one of the 'inconvinceables,' and I anticipate much amusement from the delightful perplexities you will have to encounter. The idea of Mr. Spencer, of Spencer Court (some Castle Dangerous of the south), and of many hard cold, Scottish acres in Donegall, being permitted by our mercurial people to do as he pleases ; to dream of being allowed to steer a middle course, undulating between orange and green, with a leaf of our southern shamrock in one button-hole, and a petal of the northern lily in the other, dancing down the middle with an Orange-man on his right hand and a Whiteboy on his left, then up again with the Whiteboy on his right and the Orangeman on his left !—it is really too ridiculous. I repeat, you do not seem to consider—perhaps you do not know—that we are two people—the Anglo-Irish, and—" her lip curled a little as she spoke it—"the mere Irish ; two religions ; yet your wise lawgivers will legislate for us as if we were one people and one religion. And *you* think to progress among us just as calmly as you have done among your well-fed, well-clothed tenants in sunny Berkshire, where peace and plenty, and a score of other comforts, have made the rich contented, and the poor prosperous—each being the helpmate of the other."

"But, my dear Lady Mary," he interrupted, "I am convinced it is only a calm and moderate, yet a fixed and steady, middle course that can be beneficial to Ireland."

"Granted," replied the lady, "but at the moment I was thinking of you, and not of the country. Nay, you need not bow ; I was only thinking how absurd a moderate man would appear among our immoderate people ; thinking, moreover, who the magician is, or what the miracle will be, that can make a middle course popular."

"I do not think," replied Mr. Spencer, looking more than usually serious, "I do not think a resolve to persevere in what I honestly consider the only system that can be attended with desirable results to the country, however it may inflict pain and injury on myself, deserves to be noted as absurd. I am visiting Ireland with a determination to do my best for the people without reference to person or to party."

Lady Mary shook her head, and a deep and earnest expression again overshadowed her features.

"You are right," she said, "quite right, and, believe me, I did but jest ; we *mere* Irish are accustomed to laugh even at our miseries—the only way we have of getting rid of them ; but those who come among us with a real desire to see and hear for themselves, and

then do us service, if they can, deserve our gratitude, and may God bless their good work!"

At this moment a venerable-looking gentleman passed close to Lady Mary O'Brien; she rose and extended her hand to him; the greeting was cordial, but it awoke some painful thoughts and feelings, for immediately afterwards she turned away to hide tears that fell into the foaming and rushing waves, as she again bent over the side of the steamer. Mr. Spencer immediately opened a book, and seemed to read, but he was too deeply interested by the people about him to pay much attention to the volume he held in his hand; a knot of "Parliament Men" stood close together, discussing some popular or unpopular measure of the session, and not looking particularly worn or overworked. One little, animated, restless man, had the ear of his companions, and uttered his opinions in a shrill voice, expressing as much by his pantomime as by his words, while a bright-eyed, burly gentleman, who seemed full of the good things of this life, and especially of rich, abounding, overflowing humour, "cut in" every now and then upon the small orator's eloquence: and his interruptions were invariably followed by the abundant harmony of Irish laughter, up-rolling from Irish hearts. At the opposite side of the ship, reclining upon a pile of cushions, and coats and cloaks, was a young girl, evidently in the last stage of consumption; her mother, who sat by her side, was pressing the thin, fleshless fingers in her large hand, and holding them as tightly as if her grasp could retain the life that seemed rapidly ebbing. In return for kind suggestions from many who had never seen them before, and would probably never see them again, she said, "her darling" couldn't bear the close air below; she could hardly breathe where they were; she had taken hei to a great London doctor, who had done her no good, and now her whole cry was to be carried home; and the young woman echoed the words with her feeble lips, and still feebler breath, and murmured, "Home, mother, home!" A nursery girl, or, as she desired to be considered, "a lady's maid," was fruitlessly endeavouring to do several things at once, "hushowing" in her arms a particularly cross baby, who would cry, and endeavouring to prevent a breach of the peace between an ugly cur named Jessie, and a "bould boy," who insisted upon pulling Jessie by the tail, when nurse wanted her to come forward, by the string, which was twisted round what (figuratively) would be called her *little* finger. As this inconvenient group staggered along the deck, Jessie every now and then snapping at the gentlemen's toes, while young master stumbled over them, Mr. Spencer was much amused by a sort of monologue the "lady's maid" was getting through, *sotto voce*, the wide borders of her cap flapping sail-fashion in the wind, while the "floating" of her "light English cotton" exhibited a pair of remarkably stout limbs, sately cased in black worsted stockings.

"Masther Tim, Masther Tim, avick, let the baste's tale alone, dear; she's English, my darlint and not used to do anythino she

doesn't plase, jewel ; not like yer own little Pincher at home, that never offered to bite any thing, barring the tax-man ;" then a great squall from the baby called her attention to the plunging parcel she found it hard enough to manage.

" Whisht, whisht, darlint, you'll disturb your mamma that's in the cabin. Oh, then, I wish from my very sowl they'd as fine cabins on shore as they have tossing on the say, just for sport. Whisht ! Oh ! murder, what'll I do with you in the night, at all at all, and the sixpen'orth of barley-sugar gone already !"

There were many other children, and one or two other servants ; but the latter, from their quiet manner, Mr. Spencer supposed were not "natives," and the children were returning from English schools. " Och, my sorrow !" muttered the guardian of the child and dog, as the party promenaded by : " I beg your pardon, sir, but will ye tell me what o'clock it is ?"

Mr. Spencer, not being aware of the propensity of the Irish peasant to know how time goes, was amused, but answered ; and the woman resumed, " We shall have twinty hours of it still, through wind and waather ; all for what ?—going to a watering-place ; and I give ye my worl, sir, for all it was done out like a paradise, where they drank it—the water I mane—the river Shannon would be ashamed of the shadow of an Irish face, if it was like that dirty iren trash th'-y went so far to drink. Are we in the Irish sea yet, yer honour ?"

The young Englishman was somewhat astonished at the easy, yet respectful manner of the woman, and would have replied ; but, apparently to avoid a gentleman who was walking up and down the deck, she muttered, " The Lord preserve us, and send the ship safe home," and crossing herself, turned abruptly away.

Mr. Spencer's quick eye had noted this person from the moment he came on board, as having dismissed the lad who carried his valise, with half the usual gratuity, two tracts, and a brief expostulation on the sin of extortion. He was a remarkably tall, stout, powerful man, his frame well knit together, his chest broad and muscular, and his large head supported by a thick, red neck, round which was folded a full-sized well stiffened, well-arranged, neck-cloth. An ordinary physiognomist would not have found it necessary to look more than once into his face before determining his character. The nose was blunt and coarse, the mouth—that truth-telling volume without words—close shut, and firm ; but habit had drawn down its corners, so as to give it, particularly at times, an expression of woe and wailing, as if that single feature mourned for the sins of all its brethren, who were still sensual and stubborn. The eyes were keen and wandering, and the full chin, and thick, heavy "jowl" was irreclaimably evil. Only that his coat was blue, instead of black, those who followed his footsteps might have supposed him a dignitary of the church, for his bearing was gentlemanly ; but those who met him, and who knew Ireland—so completely did his face destroy the effect of his figure —would have called him an attorney or a middleman, and put up

a prayer for those of whom he claimed his dues. As he in his turn passed Mr. Spencer, he said, in a strong Munster accent, softened to a whine: "A most blessed evening, Sir; a crowning mercy to have such an evening."

Mr. Spencer bowed—he felt so much repugnance to the person that he could not answer him civilly. Perhaps this coldness disturbed the seemingly placid humour of the man; for immediately after, "Masther Tim," who had contrived to cut the dog's string, came running and tumbling over everything in his way, and consequently over the disdained gentleman's feet and ankles; the boy ran on—the dog doubled to get to her protector, and again inconvenienced the same person, who turned hastily round, his face red with abrupt passion, and dealing the animal a kick that sent it spinning along the deck, exclaimed, with a sort of oath abridged, "Get out of my way, ye're as bad as the Papists."

"It's a grate compliment ye've paid her," said the servant, with a look of contempt that kindled into one of fierceness before the sentence was finished, and while the cross baby was crying on one arm, she "tucked" the dog under the other. "It's a grate compliment ye've paid her, Mr. Richards, Sir; but ye're wrong, Sir; she comes of a Protestant family; one of your own sort—barring she's not a turn-coat." The taunt goaded as bitterly as the woman intended it should, for Mr. Richards had once held a different, and far less popular faith than he at that time professed.

For a moment he regarded the speaker with so fiendish a glare, that Mr. Spencer thought he would have struck her—while she, with hardly less of the demon in her face, awaited the issue. But the fire and wrath faded from the man's countenance; and then, in a soft, oily voice, he said, "Oh, Betty, my good girl, is that you—and how's the mistress? I am sure I didn't know who the dog belonged to, or I would not have shoved it out of the way."

"Ah, ah!" answered Betty, "the ould story—hit him hard, he's no friends; but poor Jessie has a back still if it's not broke, Sir. There, keep yer hand out of her way, for she bites to the bone."

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" said Mr. Richards.

"Don't fal-lal yer fingers any more at her, or I'll not be able to keep her quiet," growled Betty, who was strongly inclined to let the angry animal go.

"Thank you, Betty, I shall see the mistress by an'by;" then he added, in a sort of whisper, "have you any time for reading, my poor girl?" and he put his hand into his capacious pocket to take out a tract.

"Will I have a shilling?" answered Betty, affecting not to understand him, "I'd be sorry to refuse, Sir—the first time of asking," she said, a sly expression of humour chasing away the venom that had a moment before tainted every feature of her round ruddy face.

Mr. Richards looked perplexed—or, as the woman would have expressed it, "bothered," and muttering something about "no small change," repocketed his ~~valuables~~ and turned away.

The steamer went boldly on her voyage with her mingled cargo of different creeds, and totally different views, sweeping forwards, foaming and groaning as if discontented with her freight.

Mr. Spencer's attention was next drawn towards two singularly beautiful and graceful girls, who were earnestly expressing to their father, (the old gentleman with whom Lady Mary O'Brien had so warmly shaken hands,) the delight they felt at returning home after a few weeks of absence.

They were young Irish gentlewomen ; frank and warm in manner, yet protected by a dignity and delicacy of deportment which prevented the possibility of that warmth and frankness being misunderstood ; they conversed with the poor woman whose daughter lay on the deck, and while one poured some eau-de-Cologne on her hands, and steeped her coarse cotton handkerchief in perfume, the other placed a cushion beneath her head. This was all done without parade ; it was the natural discharge of a duty which the healthful owe to the suffering.

But if Mr. Spencer fancied he was the only observer on board the steam-packet, he was much mistaken. He was, although profoundly ignorant of the fact, far more the observed than the observant. He had been speculated, and commented upon, and his every movement had been noted, by two women—whom it would be as unjust to present as examples of the ladies of Ireland, as it would be to point out the Monday mob at Gravesend as the gentlewomen of England ; good, worthy creatures they were, in their way, only ridiculous when they sought to elbow themselves into what they would have called “carriage company.” In Ireland there is a habit, which, some years ago, was stronger and more general than it is at present—by which a lady was distinguished according to her husband's profession—that is to say, provided it was a “liberal” one ; no woman ever thought of being called Mrs. Grocer Finnerty—or Mrs. Housepainter Grady—or Mrs. Bookseller O'Haggerty : but there was no end to the Mrs. Counsellor Kinealeys—the Mrs. Captain Doyles—and the Mrs. Colonel O'Neils ; while even a Mrs. Attorney Higgins was unwilling that her “rank” should be overlooked. It was a little bit of show, and distinction, which, in the simple vanity of their hearts, they enjoyed ; no harm in it ; yet it was one of the things that struck Mr. Spencer—as it does every stranger—as odd and absurd, when he heard a lady tell her servant to go down to the cabin, and ask the steward for Mrs. Counsellor Brown's Cashmere shawl.

The two who took such interest in Mr. Spencer, were a Mrs. Counsellor Hackett, who talked loud in a rich, full, Cork voice and accent, to Mrs. Attorney Murphy—“I've a great mind, my dear, to go up and make myself known to that illigant creature, Lady Mary O'Brien,” said Mrs. Hackett ; “if she wasn't so short-sighted she'd know me a mile off. I've known *her* since she was the height of a green rush, and I'd like to do it, just to take the shine

out of Mrs. Brown ; ever since they set up a carriage, she boasts she'll keep none but carriage, and the first county, company ; yet she never had a lady of title enter her doors—I *reely* think I will ; for I should like to know who *HE* is, above all earthly things, and maybe she'd introduce me ; he seems mighty sweet upon her, and she so short a time a widow."

"I'll tell the counsellor, so I will, Mrs. Hackett, dear," lisped pretty little Mrs. Attorney.

"Oh, bother, nonsense!" exclaimed the jovial-looking lady : "God be praised, I've no daughters of my own to get off now, but there's the counsellor's two sisters, and my own three nieces—charming, illigant creatures! at any rate, I'd like to know who he is ; I'm certain that he's the right thing ; he's one of us, I'm sure."

"I don't agree with you, and I hope you'll excuse me for it, ma'am," said Mrs. Murphy ; "I heerd his own man say, that his master was going to Derry."

"To Derry!" exclaimed Mrs. Hackett, in a tone of deep indignation, "to Derry!—to the heart of the black North! Himself in a bottle-green cloak of beautiful Spanish cloth, and his servants in grass-green liveries! Mrs. Murphy, it's impossible, it's not mad he'd be to go to the North—himself in a bottle-green cloak, and his two fine servant-men in grass-green liveries! He'd be murdered ; he can't know the ways of the country ; it would be only Christian charity to tell him, for maybe he's a stranger from France or Spain—I'm sure he is, ma'am! he's so dark, with Italian eyes, such as they have in Rome, and such a noble air. May the saints protect the dear young gentleman! but it's almost a point of conscience to put him on his guard. Oh! that I should ever hear a bottle-green cloak and grass-green liveries talk of going to the bitter black North!"

"I wonder your friend Lady Mary O'Brien does not tell him," suggested Mrs. Murphy.

"Thath! my dear! Lady Mary, though she ought to be what all her seed, breed, and generation were, as good, and better than ourselves, has been wandering in England ; her husband was a Protestant, and she was always mighty liberal—and more than that—"

The steamer had now got fully into the open sea, and in addition to its usual shaking, commenced rolling as ships will do, despite all that is said to the contrary. Mrs. Hackett bore up against these sea miseries with the air of a heroine ; but at last, as Mrs. Murphy assisted her in descending the cabin stairs, she looked into her friend's face with an air of intense suffering, and exclaimed, "Oh dear! dear! darling! It isn't the *shake*, but the *roll* of it, that's killing me!"

## CHAPTER II.

## THE KEY-NOTE.

THE night was passing without any occurrence to disturb the monotony of a "Night at Sea;" there was the dim, uncertain light of the full-orbed, but often clouded moon—the twinkling of the mysterious stars—the rush and roll of the waters—the spray falling on the deck—the heavy tramp of the few watchers—the motion and shaking of the engine increasing the vibration "natural" to a legitimate ship—the heavy smell of the oil—and in the cabins the half-sleepy complaints and querulous grumblings of the passengers—the coming forth of all the little, mean selfishness of human nature, redeemed, however, by the self-sacrifices of some who give up the pillow or vinaigrette to those who need it more than themselves. Mr. Spencer folded himself in his cloak,— "the bottle-green," which had excited "Mrs. Counsellor's" sympathy—and continued on deck long after his fair friend, and the greater number of passengers, had disappeared. Edward Spencer's nature was that of a deep-minded, thoughtful, refined Englishman; slow to receive impressions, but clinging to them with a tenacity which hardly admitted of change. He could not entertain a single paltry feeling—his manners were as calm and as classic as his mind. The romance of Irish history, and the romance of the Irish people, had entered his heart; though he never quoted poetry, and could as easily have turned the world on its axis as a tune, the patriotic songs of Moore were treasured in his memory; and Irish heroism, without distinction of party, was one of the idols of his mind-worship; he took extensive views both of things and people, but could hardly be considered an observer of, or a carer for, small matters; thus, he was peculiarly unfitted to comprehend the bickerings and bitternesses, the petty malignant nothings which form the superstructure of Irish discontent, frequently to the exclusion of thought for actual and positive grievances. He was fully aware of the real miseries of the country, thoroughly indignant at the long past cruelty, and the continued neglect, which had characterised the conduct of England to a sister she never treated as an equal, nor even with the tenderness which the elder is expected to bestow upon the younger. Perhaps the strongest principle of his nature was a love of justice; he was so accustomed to weigh and balance, that he never could attach himself to what is called a party; it was his habit—a habit inseparable from his moral constitution—to seek for the right path, and to follow it implicitly. During his purposed residence upon the estate to which Lady Mary had alluded, Edward Spencer had resolved to do more in one year than any practical man would have attempted to accomplish in ten, or twenty; all his plans for the improvement of his English estates had succeeded so admirably,

that he determined to apply to Irish grievances the systems and remedies he had applied to English ones ; summing up his thoughts on the subject with, “they cannot be so *unreasonable* as to reject that,”—“they cannot upon mature consideration refuse this ;” forgetting, as strangers usually do, that he had to deal with a people who feel while others reason, and who act too rapidly upon that feeling to give “mature consideration” to any earthly thing ; still he was perfectly and entirely in earnest in his desire to deal justly with a long enduring country ; and so truthful was his nature, that he had no intention of reserving—no wish to hide—his sentiments ; though, like the generality of Englishmen, he was more reflective than experimental. He was, in short, young, full of the unscathed hope of one born to riches and station ; in the enjoyment of good health, an even temper, and the glorious desire and laudable ambition of serving his fellow-creatures. As the moon rose he was still pacing the deck, pausing occasionally, and gazing towards the west, the land where he hoped his name might yet be blessed as a benefactor ; he thought of the generous enthusiasm of its inhabitants, of their patient endurance, their intense earnestness ! His deep devotion to his own faith taught him to sympathise with those who were ready to sacrifice their lives for that which they held sacred. His imagination erected cottages and covered them with roses ; at one end of his smiling village arose the spire of a church, and at the other the cross of a chapel ; the village green was in the centre and fronted the school, from which issued children of “all denominations,” well clothed, noisy with joy, and full of spirits as of health ; gray-haired domestics crowded round Spencer Court, the parish priest and the Protestant clergyman sat at the same board ;—but who besides sat there, Lady paramount of love, and wit, and beauty ? His cheek flushed, while in that direction his thoughts wandered ; and as he passed his hand over his face, the vision vanished. He was neither in a smiling village, nor at a well-filled board—but on the deck of the hissing, and groaning, and heaving steamer, one of the most nervous and discontented class of vessels that ever took rank among

“The monsters of the deep.”

The waste of waters was around him, and a noble, stately ship, with her sails set, was bending gracefully before the breeze by which they were opposed. There was something so dignified and majestic in its motion, that he could not avoid smiling at her queenly progress, when contrasted with the noise, and opposition, and outrage of the little resolute, but most mechanical, steamer. In an incredibly short time they were again alone : again the young man’s thoughts reverted to the “darling West,” and his hope became stronger and more fervent that he might yet be made a blessing to the generous affectionate people who had found place in his heart—whom he had resolved to care for, and “conciliate,” and cherish, and redress. While thus exulting in

the hope of the future, which now seemed an approaching reality, his attention to the present was suddenly aroused by the old gentleman—the same who had been recognised with so much affection by Lady Mary O'Brien.

“This steam will be a great thing for Ireland,” he said, addressing Mr. Spencer; “it will indeed be a great thing; it will draw the countries closer together, induce an influx of English capital, make us better known to each other. Although an Irishman, and a warm lover of my country, I do not hesitate to say it must improve us in every respect, while it will also give additional advantages to England.”

“I quite agree with you,” said Mr. Spencer. “In three or four years we shall see an immense difference.”

“No, not quite so soon as that,” answered his companion. “You must pardon me for saying such eager anticipation savours rather of Irish impatience than of English calculation. It will be a long and tedious lesson to teach England to confide in us, and still more difficult to teach us to confide in England. We have each something to forgive, and more to forget, and both a great deal to learn of one another. You are in a state of deplorable ignorance as to our wants, and powers, and characters, and we are loath to acknowledge, as were the people of old, that any good can come out of Galilee—at least to us; but rapid communication is a decided step in favour of both countries; an influx of strangers must serve us, and,” he added, “I do not think—I am sorry to say so—that any mode of transit can increase the number of our ABSENTEES. May God pardon those who forget a landlord’s duties, when they receive a landlord’s income! But this steam will work wonders. We, standing thus on the deck of one of the earliest of the vessels by which the voyage has been made a certainty, can hardly anticipate the vast results. You will live to see them; I shall not.”

“I am sure, Sir, I hope you will,” exclaimed Edward.

“Thank you for the warmth of the wish, my young friend,” answered Dean Graves; “thank you truly. We Irish can bear injustice better than indifference; if you would serve us, you must not only feel for us, but express your feelings. Lady Mary O’Brien tells me you mean to do a great deal, and a great deal can be done with the tenantry of Spencer Court. I knew your uncle well, and when you are in that part of the world shall be happy to pay you any attention, or give you any information in my power. I shall be your neighbour when you are there and I am at home.”

Mr. Spencer thanked him; the voice and manner had impressed him strongly in favour of his new acquaintance. He was the perfection of a gentleman of the old school; frank and polished: he had lifted his hat at the commencement of their conversation, and his white hair floated like a halo round one of the finest heads Edward had ever seen. They had inspired each other with confidence—a feeling which arose from each involuntarily believing in the other’s truth. They were the only passengers on deck during

the still hour of midnight, and they sat down at the same moment, as men do when they are resolved to have a somewhat lengthened "talk" on interesting subjects. The clergyman was again the first to commence the conversation.

"The country is fearfully disturbed just now, and I am almost sorry you are coming among us at such a time."

"I have not the least fear," replied Edward. "Lady Mary declares there is no instance on record of their injuring a stranger."

"But you are a landholder, and they may fancy you composed of ejections and latitats," said Mr. Graves, smiling.

"No fear of that: I have forgiven them all arrears; and as I shall put everything to rights myself—hear with my own ears—see with my own eyes, and act from my own judgment, I do not think I, for one, shall be injured."

Mr. Graves again smiled at his brave words, but made no allusion to them, simply saying, "Not in person I hope and believe. Even I have no fear of that; but take care you are not injured towards the people in heart and spirit. I dread the reaction upon such a mind as I am told you possess. I dread the dissolving of your dream, for all knowledge of Ireland, acquired only by hearsay, leads to dreams. I dread the effect of the certain quality of disappointment you must experience more than I do the evil whisperings or daring proclamations of those who will seek to win you to their several modes of thinking. I dread it because Ireland wants men like you—not to stand by a party, but by the country. Men with sympathies and capital, men also with memories, capable of tracing back the various causes of the people's discontent to by-gone times and by-gone events, which, however forgotten or overlooked in England, are still freshly kept in mind in Ireland—freshly as if they were but growths of yesterday; for they are continually revived, not only by agitators of the moment, but by a higher and holier class—of feelings as well as of men; men who love their country and honour its patriots. You may imagine that in visiting Ireland you are visiting only one people; you are visiting two."

“ ‘Two!’ ” repeated Edward, remembering at the moment Lady Mary’s words.

"It is even so,—two! Protestant Ireland and Catholic Ireland, Saxon Ireland and Celtic Ireland; but the blood of the Irish Saxon is as hotly boiling as that of the Irish Celt. They boil against each other; and, perhaps, the chief motive of union between the Saxon Irish and your country is the Church establishment; *that* is the bond which binds the Irish Protestant to England; but for that both might overboil against you, as they do now against each other."

Mr. Graves paused, and Edward for some time made no reply: he was thinking.

"I dare say," said he, at length, "that what you observe is quite true; and perhaps — have

protected a party, and not a people.—I have often heard my poor uncle say as much."

" You are right in that opinion," observed Mr. Graves, " whatever party has been dominant in England, has, to a certain extent, protected that nearest to itself in Ireland ; but as the peasantry, the very, very poor, have no party, no covenant with their country, the population of Ireland have had only occasional friends. Strangers frequently, like yourself, come among us, with generous and large desires of usefulness, and kindly and extensive sympathies, but, insensibly drawn into the vortex of party, they either become accustomed to the misery which at first appalled them, or are so overwhelmed by its extent that they turn away altogether from the voice of the weeper, and join in the common cry of want of care and providence in a population, who, even when able to obtain employment, have only existed on what, in your country, would have caused a hundred rebellions, under the name of starvations. A few speak loudly of, and feel keenly, the moral degradation that want creates ; the cry of the multitude is echoed by them ; and *initiated* by others—by others who augment evil by misdirecting agitation ; yet, all the while they argue that the fruits of peace may be thus gathered—grapes from thorns and figs from thistles."

" The country sadly wants repose," said Edward Spencer.

" Most true," replied Mr. Graves, " but the deep sea-calm of a starving multitude, sinking by hundreds into the grave, is not, I am certain, the sort of repose which you would wish to see continued in my poor country." Neither spoke for some moments, and then Mr. Graves resumed: " Let me," he said, " again caution you against harsh judging in any case ! Do not suffer the Orange party of the North to persuade you that their warmer brethren of the South are *all* violent and bigoted ; nor the Roman Catholics of the South to impress you with the idea that the Orangemen of the North are all bitter and fierce destroyers ; in all you hear you must take into account the quick beatings of our hearts, and our universal habit of exaggeration ; not from a desire to falsify, but as issuing out of a rich imagination that converts us into a nation of poets. We think what we say, while we speak ; but we feel strongly, and do not prepare our words before we utter them. We want judgment rather than genius."

" I am sure," said Edward, " I am delighted to hear all this ; I fancied the tone of the Irish churchmen to be Puritan rather than Protestant ; but Lady Mary has frequently quoted you as a specimen of what a Protestant clergyman can be to his Roman Catholic neighbours. I have heard her say that Dean Graves was kind in manners as well as generous in money, and zealous to promote friendly intercourse between Protestant and Catholic, while his charity to the poor was dispensed with an even hand."

The old gentleman shook his head. " Remember what I told

you of Irish exaggeration ; Lady Mary exceedingly magnifies the virtues of her friends. I must, however, in common justice to my brother clergymen state, that I believe they are individually generous to the poor Catholics, though less willing than, I think, they ought to be to extend the hand of fellowship to the ministers of the other creed ; but, local circumstances have much influence with all of us. I have studied the character of the people more than many, and I know their history well ; my circumstances have rendered me independent of church preferment, which, I regret to say, few of my brethren are. But, to return to the subject of my anxiety ; I wish I could show those who cry out against Irish outrage and Irish discontent, a few of the palliating circumstances, which a little knowledge and reflection would enable them to comprehend, and I would trust the issue to the feelings of kindly sympathy implanted in every human bosom. I pray your patience ; I am an old man now, but the love of my native land, of both Celt and Saxon, is as warm in my heart as it was when, in my boyhood, I joined the Irish volunteers ; purer, certainly, for many of my prejudices have vanished, and I should be sorry to have some of the feelings now which I thought glorious then. Again I crave your patience only for a little time ; it is cool and fresh here, and the words I have to say I would wish to speak beneath the arch of that Heaven which registers our words, for good or evil."

Edward assured Mr. Graves of his entire attention.

" You know then," recommenced the venerable gentleman, " that the heads of many of the highest of our Irish families perished in defence of their rights ; treachery frequently accomplished what the sword and the law might have spared. Their lands were seized, often without a show of reason, and the descendants—as the Scotch have it, 'the kith and kin'—of the chieftain lingered in the mountain fastnesses, maintaining a guerrilla-like warfare, struggling against the power which had outraged, betrayed, starved, destroyed, all but conquered them ; it is the Irish idea of fixity of tenure, that they were never conquered."

" But how would they define conquest ?" inquired Edward.

" They define nothing ; an Irishman's faith is equal to his feeling, and his feeling to his faith ; he is told by the only persons he considers he can trust, that he has never been conquered ; he believes it, resolving never to be contented. Now mark me—in process of time the very hunters tired of pursuit ; the dogs of war became wearied ; they retired to the shelter of the valleys and the security of the towns ; they built castles to protect their newly-acquired territory ; and in their power, the hunted ones were forgotten, because despised ; still, in a little time, as they crept from their fastnesses they became necessary to the settlers ; they were employed as labourers—mind you, *upon their own land*, so they still considered it ; they were trampled on and insulted on all occasions ; they were not deemed worthy even of

conciliation ; it would have seemed humanity to have expatriated them at once ; better to have taken their lives, when those lives were rendered a means of torture. Now mark me—even more closely—they still bear their proud ancestral names ; the blood of their native princes does not stagnate in their veins ; it flows as freely as though they were not as they are ; their faith was outraged and insulted—”

“ But not now,” interrupted Edward ; “ though as yet they are not thoroughly emancipated, you cannot call their faith insulted now.”

“ Was my faith so treated in this year, 1822, I confess to you I should so consider it,” was the reply. “ I would be content, if it were the Almighty’s will, to be called away from life to-morrow, if any such sacrifice could unite my countrymen in the bonds of my own faith, believing it to be the best and purest given from God to man ; for it I would live, and for it I would die ; but I am not, therefore, insensible to the wickedness and folly of the penal statutes, which, by perpetual insult and injustice, have mocked at national equality ; it is as though a man were to place his foot upon the neck of his prostrate fellow-creature, and then, while he keeps him firmly down, to bid him rise, in all the dignity of human nature ! The commonest peasant feels this, and though as a clergyman I would joy to receive those who felt themselves in error, I cannot, as a man, but respect the firmness which, despite scorn and degradation, has hitherto united the peasant to his faith, mingled though it be with a superstition, which is a part of the national religion, as well as the national poetry.”

“ I quite agree with you,” said Mr. Spencer, “ the superstition of Ireland is the foundation of its national school of poetry ; its faith is intense, but I, of course, speak from thought and feeling, not from observation or experience.”

“ The Irish peasant,” continued Mr. Graves, “ lives amid the faded glories of his country, knows and feels it ; his cabin is mud-walled and miserable, yet the ruined castle he passes by, to go to his ill-remunerated labour, bears his name. This yields him a gloomy satisfaction ! he looks on the crumbling walls, and *knows* that the glories of his ancestors are not mere fables. His wife, while digging the potato garden, or whirring at her wheel, sings the cherished legends of his race ; tells their triumphs and their oppressions to the children who tremble in rags at her knee ; and dim prophecies of the future—when ‘ Ireland shall be herself again’—when Ireland shall belong to the Irish—when Tara’s kings shall dispense ‘ justice to Ireland ’—are repeated and listened to with avidity at every wake and fair ; the story-teller vies with the piper in attracting listeners ; and grateful as they feel for *individual* kindnesses of the Saxon race, they look upon them in a body, as not only intruders, but oppressors.”

“ Surely, even-handed justice could prevent this,” said Edward. Mr. Graves smiled. “ It would not be easy to persuade a man

that you meant him justly, while you retained what he believed to be his."

"But consider the impossibility of upsetting a country, after centuries of undisturbed inheritance have passed," observed Edward.

"Of course," answered the Dean, "I know that: but fancy the impolicy of leaving a highly sensitive, and imaginative people to brood, with misery and want for their companions, over the wildly, but truly, chronicled tales of former greatness—wrenched from them by force or fraud. If they had been drawn into active life; if they had found their labour sufficiently productive to afford subsistence; if efforts had been made to elevate, and not depress them, in the scale of humankind; such memories would have faded into fables, or have been in a great degree lost,—as they must be, where existing realities demand perpetual thought, instead of romancing over an old man's tale. We all seek something to cling to in this world—something to raise us above the tides and currents of life; the poor Englishman clings to his comforts; the poor Irishman might have done the same, *if he had had them to cling to*; but ragged, tattered, the shivering wreck of the past—his foot still on his native heath; the music of his native land ringing in his ears; the history of his country graven on his heart; those in whom he trusts whispering disquieting advice—the advice his restless, ardent, and faithful nature best loves to hear; the only marvel is, that instead of occasional outbursts—the festering indications of unhealthy constitutions—the disease has not been more universal and more deadly. Think, my dear Sir, of these things; think, as I have so often found it necessary to do, lest my heart should harden; think, not so much of what, under the excitement and influence of dangerous men, the people do, as of what for a long series of years they have forborne to do."

The old man rose, excited both by his feelings and the subject, and extended his hand to Edward Spencer, while he added—

"I hope to meet you frequently hereafter; and, I trust you will, despite all untoward circumstances, remember what I have said."

The dawn of the shivering morning came at last, with the usual lull of wind, and the ringing of the bell, and the cold water cure applied to the narrow boards, and the scraping sound of the hard brush, the gruff voice of the captain perhaps, and the coiling or uncoiling of the ropes—those who are so unfortunate as to be awake on ship-board, seldom give a thought to the cruelty of waking the sleepers. The morning had changed to midday, and another afternoon had come before the opposite coast was reached. Few of our acquaintances among the passengers, however, cared to leave their berths, until the welcome news was conveyed below, that the steamboat was about to enter the Cork river—the famous and beautiful river Lee. And beautiful indeed it is! Astonished and delighted was Edward Spencer, delighted past all telling; he had pictured a universal want of wood, but plantations sloped to

the very water's edge. He looked from side to side, with increased emotion ; he gazed around and around, and—cold as was his exterior, in heart and soul, Edward Spencer was a thorough enthusiast—in the fervour of the moment, he prayed earnestly that God would make him the means of good to the people with whom he was about to dwell. No selfish desire, no prejudice, no sectarian, or political bitterness marred the purity of this prayer, which, though unheard by human ear, was registered in Heaven, as one of the pure heart-offerings of an Englishman to the land of the Shamrock.

“ Hurra for Ould Ireland ! ” exclaimed Betty, who, having left her incumbrances below, ran on deck to breathe again the Irish air, “ Hurra, my jewel ; there ye are, my own darlin' river, bright as a diamond and clear as crystal ! Oh, wisha, wisha, God be praised, that I see ye once more”—and, clasping her hands in ecstasy, she dropped down on her knees close to where Mr. Spencer stood. At any other time he would, perhaps, have smiled at her enthusiasm ; but now he fully entered into it, and as Englishmen generally show their approbation by giving money, he placed half-a-guinea in her hand.

“ Why, then, the Lord be good to yer honour ! ” she said, rising slowly, and glancing from the coin to the donor as she turned it over and over in her palm, “ it's long since we saw the like o' that—and now, if there's any thing I can do to serve yer honour, just say it ; and, faith, Betty Doyle'll be the girl that'll do it ! I knew very well the PARTY yer nobility was of, when I saw the glance ye threw at that base, black-hearted turn-coat, that's tuning up the morning hymn below there (I pray the saints it may turn to a marrow-bone in his ugly throat). Whisht ! there's the mistress ; good-bye, and God bless ye, Sir. Sure I'll be past Spencer Court before yer honour, and may be I won't give them the wind of the word as to yer honour's PARTY.”

The man of no party was not sufficiently versed in Irish affairs to understand why a glance of his eye, directed to a person who was exceedingly disagreeable to him, should have identified him, even in the opinion of one of the lower orders, with a “ party.” He would have spoken to Lady Mary about it, but he knew she would laugh at him.

As they drew near the city, many of the ladies came on deck ; and the kind, gentle-hearted sisters, who had been so attentive to the poor sick girl and her mother, immediately went to make inquiries as to how they had passed the night—beneath a sort of rude tent constructed above them. A shawl had been laid lightly and carefully over the girl's face.

“ I am sure,” said the eldest of the two to the mother, “ you must be very glad to be so near land.”

The woman looked at her, but made no reply.

“ We are almost arrived, and there are all the dear, ragged Paddies, watching, and cheering ; do you not hear them ? ”

“ I hear a bell,” she answered, “ a deep—deep toned bell—it

has been striking here these two hours,"—and she pressed her hands on her temples.

"Your daughter will get better," said the young lady, who was confused, if not alarmed, by the woman's manner, "she will be home soon."

"She *is* home—she *is* home:" she repeated, and withdrew the covering from her face. The sisters shrank back—the girl was dead—and the bereaved mother fell with a shriek, that answered the wild cheer from shore, upon the body of her child.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE TWO SIDES.

No matter now frankly and freely English people converse on ship-board, when they land, an intimacy is dissolved; they no longer know each other; or, if upon first meeting on *terra firma*—betrayed by a sudden impulse into an irregular act, they bow or even smile, they immediately draw back in a regretful sort of way, as if the reminiscence was anything but a pleasure. They are as cautious in forming, as they are firm in keeping, friends. On the other hand, their mercurial brethren of the green island, become familiar at once, and joy in a new face, as the English do in an old one. The cold suspicion of English manners is peculiarly and painfully embarrassing to those who remain only a short time in the country; while the warm greeting of an Irishman, who, really, at the moment means all he says, is a more than "set off" against the strangeness of things in general, and the small annoyances which people, accustomed to order and regularity, must in Ireland perpetually encounter.

Edward Spener had never before been in Cork; it was his first visit to Ireland; and it was with no little anxiety he set out—the morning after his arrival—to investigate its "beauties." At that time, much more than at present, no gentleman could pass along without being followed, or, when he paused, surrounded by beggars—the quantity and quality of whose offensive rags were enough, without the wretchedness which sought shelter beneath the scanty covering, to excite a feeling of repugnance allied with that of pity, which no one who has not been in the country can at all comprehend. To Mr. Spencer, the scene was one of a most painful character; one for which he was unprepared. There was an utter hopelessness about the multitude of beggars—which made him shiver; he wondered how the denizens of the large and stately houses that rose on every side, could exist without—if not overcoming, at least lessening and alleviating, a system of wretchedness that seared his eyes and his heart. With their cries and supplications in his ears, and such a fell dance of misery and distortion, and skeleton existence around him, he could enjoy nothing. Idiots and the extremity of age—manhood and infancy

—intreating for one halfpenny to save from starvation! During his brief pause upon the quay, he had seen droves of cattle on their way for embarkation; crates filled with eggs and poultry—all the evidences, in short, of surplus plenty; and as he marvelled that a hungry population suffered them to depart, he ran over in his mind the scenes he had witnessed abroad; his memory was distanced by the reality of Irish misery! The Lazzaroni, half buried in dreams beneath the warmth of an Italian sky, were princes in comparison to those who, with ghastly faces and dimmed eyes, trembled in the humid atmosphere of the second Irish city. The wideness of the streets—the dignity of the public buildings—even the lovely faces and gay *toilets* of the ladies, who laughed and flirted as gracefully as if there were no beggars in existence—were unnoticed by Edward Spencer; the beggar wit, that flashed around him, seemed as though, in most cruel mockery, the arrows of death were tipped with diamonds; he could hardly believe his senses; there was a mad jesting too, from some of the suppliants at their own wretchedness, which made him weary, faint, and sick. Beggars at every door, at every window, blockading the passages, and howling to the ears and carriages—in most appalling destitution; a population of beings, created in God's own image—degraded—rendered absolutely loathsome, by the squalid poverty which engenders disease and despair; and who could find no refuge in those days, but the grave. He longed to regain his hotel, that he might think over what he had seen, so different from what his progress down the river had led him to expect; and he had nearly accomplished his purpose, when his rapid steps were arrested by Mrs. Hackett and her husband, who placed themselves so that he could not proceed without stepping into the rolling gutter, that marked the line of the *trottoir*. All blazing in feathers, and ringlets, and gold chains, and in a dress like Jacob's coat of many colours, the lady made a flourishing courtesy, and commenced proceedings.

“Delighted to meet you, Mr. Spencer, and welcome to the ‘Emerald Isle,’ as we call it. The counsellor lost no time in calling upon you, Sir, as the friend of that sweet creature—my old friend that I knew when she first stept out of long clothes. Such a picture of a babby she was!—Lady Mary O’Brien;—but you were early afoot, Sir.”

“Yes—you were out—seeing the beauties,” added ‘the Counsellor,’ eyeing a group of smiling girls; “seeing the beauties,” he repeated, while Mrs. Hackett’s face became of a deeper hue, and she muttered something, of which Edward Spencer only heard the words “*daent*” and “*chip of the ould block*.” The counsellor took no notice of this little “*aside*;” but, without further prelude, offered himself as “*Cicerone*” to show Mr. Spencer the “*places*”—the “*gaol*,” and the court-house, and Institution, the latter of which he gravely affirmed was the finest school of oratory in Europe. Edward, sick at heart, for the wretched beggars had gathered round them, excused himself as

he best could. He was fatigued ; Mrs. Hackett assured him she had been the same “until she walked Patrick-street twice.” He was not well. “Sure they could see Doctor Myles in a minute ; the only raale doctor in Cork worth a farthing, and—one of themselves—who told stories like an angel, and could do as well for you after dinner as before it.” He had letters to write. “If he’d only step to their house hard by, there were ‘loads’ of writing-paper, and ‘lashins’ of pens and ink, and he’d be quieter there.”

This proposal was also declined, though less abruptly than the others, for the offers, despite the tone and manner, were made with irresistible good-nature,—Mr. and Mrs. Hackett being always glad to see a stranger, especially one rich and well born ; and that such was the case with Mr. Spencer, they had ascertained before they slept after the voyage. The beggars, too, had closed them in on every side ; some blessing, others intreating alms, and others lifting up their sightless heads or shrivelled arms above the crowd.

“Is it telling them you’ve given them all the small coppers you had—you are—?” said the counsellor ; “bedad they’ll offer *you* change, and give it. Here, this is a good way to get rid of them, and a run for it: that is, if you object—as I fancy you look as if you did—to use your horsewhip”—and he flung a handful of halfpence into the middle of the street, which cleared the pavement at once ; the poor creatures began scrambling, and scuffling, and howling for the coins, as wild beasts eager for their prey. This accorded so badly with Edward Spencer’s feelings—there was something so repulsive in sporting with the misery, the utter wretchedness before him—that Mrs. Hackett saw, as she would have expressed it, “he was not up to the fun ;” and, throwing as much tenderness as possible into her countenance, she said “Ah, then, I had all the pity in life for them myself, when first I came to Cork. They might have had my heart for the asking ; but there’s terrible imposture among them—as you’d find out soon—and to your cost, too—if you were to stop here long.”

Mr. Spencer shook his head ; the counsellor did not understand his new acquaintance ; his reserved, self-possessed, and almost haughty manner was particularly offensive to one who had fought his own way, not fairly and honourably, but by the lowest of law’s tricks, and fancied he was seen through by every honest man who looked him, as Edward did, “straight in the face.” Having none of the higher qualities of his profession, he made up for the deficiency by an extra quantity of keenness and cunning ; was a great man among small attorneys, and very popular with the more discontented of his party.

Mr. Spencer rendered him exceedingly uncomfortable ; and this was at once perceived by Mrs. Hackett, whose great ambition was for high company, while Counsellor David delighted in low. She was not, however, to be driven from her point. It would be a “grand thing” if Mr. Spencer of Spencer Court eat his first “raale Cork dinner” in the house of Counsellor David Hackett.

Great things might result to the family if that dinner were well managed ; and, consequently, with a speech far more flourishing than her courtesy, she invited him for the next day, and her husband would have opened his tightly closed little gray eyes wider if he could, when she assured Mr. Spencer he should meet Lady Mary O'Brien. Much to her disappointment, he resisted even this temptation. Still she was not discomfited ; but leaning on her husband's arm, who looked sullen and sulky, she walked by Mr. Spencer's side, endeavouring to amuse and interest him ; and so prove her own usefulness

“ You'll be for buying Irish linen—I'll go bail ; encouraging the manufacture of the country. There, Pat Finnerty's the place for that ; and you needn't bate him down above sixpence in the yard to get a raale bargain. A poor persecuted man he was—by the bitther Protestants ever since the trial ;—only I'd be sorry to say much against them ; I could if I liked ;—and as to gloves, Cork's the place for gentlemen's, and Limerick for ladies' gloves. I'm sure the counsellor has gloves that would fit in a pigeon's egg ;—think of that ! yet strong enough for a fox-chase.”

Mr. Spencer agreed that this was remarkable.

“ And the glass-house, and the blowing,” continued the lady. “ Maybe you'd have time to see that, this morning ; it's pure christal—as clear as a kitten's eye.”

Mr. Spencer, although he declined, said he was glad to perceive that Mrs. Hackett was enthusiastic about Irish productions, and that he hoped to see the time when they would be valued as they deserved to be, at home and abroad.

This touched Mrs. Hackett's heart ; for with all her faults and all her vulgarity, she loved her country as dearly as any woman ever did ; and she bid God bless him for that, “ any how,” with fervour and truth, as they paused at the steps of the hotel.

Mr. Spencer invited them to enter.

“ Is it me !” exclaimed Hackett, growing red, and looking furious. “ I certainly *did* call on you, Sir, there, because, as Mrs. H. said, you were her friend's friend ; but having paid the compliment—done myself the honour, I mean—I wash my hands out of the house altogether. No Irishman, Sir, knowing the wrongs of his country, would patronise that house !” and he shook his doubled hand toward the staircase with so anathematising an air, that the boards might have been supposed to tremble.

“ Ah, Sir !” sighed Mrs. Hackett, “ you must excuse the counsellor's warmth. A public man, you know, must stick to his party—it's the only back a poor fellow has : and it's a grate thing for a professional man to have a *strong back*—which, the saints be praised, he has at this minute : as strong a back as any man in Cork, though I say it. There was many a little thing I wanted to speak to you about. Lady Mary is so backwards and forwards, abroad and at home, that she goes on never heeding, and laughing, all through her own heartiness. She was always mighty hearty

in herself, God bless her! and maybe, she never gave you a hint about——”

She paused, and Mr. Spencer felt his colour mount to his temples. “I really do not understand you,” he said.

And then Mrs. Hackett laid her puffy, dimpled hand upon his arm with a motherly sort of tenderness, and half whispered, looking pathetically in his face, “Maybe she never gave you a hint about them beautiful grass-green liveries.”

“Now, really, Mrs. Hackett,” observed her husband, “Mr. Spencer is more to be honoured for this. Why should he not publish an index to his politics? It is bold and brave, there can be no mistake about it. I hope none of us are ashamed of the green.”

“But he may be murdered for it; and so may the poor boys who wear them, Counsellor Hackett,” she replied. “Sure it’s to the north he’s going, the bitter, black north; and through Dublin. And suppose they catch ‘em in College Green on the 12th of July! Grass-green on the 12th, just under the statue of King William; or in dark Belfast, or bloody Derry! Think of that! Dear gentleman, he does not know them yet!”

Mr. Spencer was more perplexed than ever; but, although he shrank from an inquiry, one fact impressed itself strongly upon him,—that he seemed, by some means unknown to himself, to have become identified with a party. So, after wishing the counsellor and his lady good morning, and thanking them for their kind attentions, and promising to call before he went to the country, he resolved, if Lady Mary had not left Cork, to entreat of her an explanation. So full was he of his peculiar situation, that he was absolutely startled, when, after one or two gentle taps at the door, Mr. Richards bowed himself into the apartment.

“As,” he said, “I hold a stewardship close to Spencer Court, and was about to journey there to-morrow, I thought I could bear some tidings for you to your house. I call mine a stewardship,” he added, after a pause, with the most hideous mock humility, “seeing that we are all stewards to give an account of our stewardship.”

The manner of the man was so exceedingly disagreeable to Mr. Spencer, that he was forced to guard himself most carefully lest he should say or look anything rude, to one whom he grievous to hear avow himself his neighbour; so he made some trivial reply, and paused, giving an opportunity to his visitor to speak, in which he evidently delighted.

“Your lot is cast in a benighted land, yet your abode is in one of the pleasantest places of the earth. Your uncle, Sir, meant well, but he was benighted—sadly benighted—led entirely by that dark vessel I saw you speaking with on the deck. A minister of our protesting church—a church protesting against the scarlet woman: yet he, its minister, holds communion—unto friendship—with the Babylonish priests and people. Though you come amongst us, Sir, with doubtful colours, surely you are in the faith?”

“I certainly am a Protestant,” answered Mr. Spencer.

“I might have known it, Sir, by finding you at this hotel; it is a sad state of things for a country when we are obliged to stand so apart from the children of perdition, as not even to frequent the same houses, which ought to be of public, not exclusive, resort.”

“And to whom, may I ask,” said the young Englishman, looking his visitor steadily in the face, “to whom do you apply the term ‘children of perdition?’”

“To the darkened offspring of Satan, Sin, and Death—the people of the Popish faith,” he replied; and bitter and galling as were his words, they were delivered in the soft, honeyed brogue which had previously so disgusted Edward Spencer; opposite to whom he had hitherto sat, but after replying to this question, he arose, and walked pompously across the room, until he stood close to him.

“I have long,” he said, “wrestled with the spirit because of this people, and sought almost in vain in the dark south for some one to assist in the glorious reformation of the peasantry. What does it matter if they continue clothed in the rags of earth, so we can but rescue their precious souls!”

“I hope good may be effected in two ways,” replied Mr. Spencer. “My plan would be first to provide them food and raiment by means of occupation, without inquiry as to their creed; and though I would of course much rather they professed the faith I know to be the purest, I would let them preserve their own rather than persecute them to its denial with their lips, and—”

What Mr. Spencer was about to add, his visitor did not wait to learn, but interrupted him before his sentence was finished. “Stay, Sir—I entreat, Sir—I see you have already been tampered with,” he said; “you little know what you have to encounter—you cannot imagine what it is. Sir, I have lived among this benighted people, I have toiled for them, taught them, employed them, enlightened them, built schools, to which they would not send their children, and given them books, which their bigotry would not let them read,—prayed for them!—and yet, see here!” He threw open his coat, and from each waistcoat-pocket peeped forth a pistol. “This is necessary for me, and will be necessary for you, too; in the present state of the country, everyone who does not travel so armed will be shot—like a dog. I tell you, you don’t know them. In the night, armed bands parade the country, and in our wild part of this unhappy land, every rock conceals a traitor. Now you look as if you had not faith in my words. Nothing is to be done but by the uprooting of their accursed faith; and woe—woe—woe to those who turn back from the plough, or cease to wield the besom of destruction.”

“I must really beg your pardon,” said Mr. Spence, not knowing how to consider his visitor, whether as sane or insane; “but I have many things to attend to; and in conclusion, can only entreat you to believe, that I am of NO PARTY, either in

religion or polities. Is that so rare a thing?" he added, half laughing; for the change that passed over the face of Richards, expressing undisguised astonishment, was quite startling; "is that so rare a thing?"

"Poor young gentleman!" he exclaimed, in a tone of pity. "Ah, dear! turning his back on the fold, abandoning the shepherd—I feared as much! I shall wrestle with the Lord for you, night and day; and just leave for your consideration—these—and these, and this little plan for the erection of one of our tabernacles in the wilderness. I grieve to see you blinded by false theories. Alas! alas! The late Mrs. Spencer, Sir, was an angel of Love. Seed, I fear me, sown in stoney ground," he added, when laying his fifth tract on the table. "Seed sown among thorns of the world and choking briars;" and down went a sixth.

Mr. Spencer took up one, and read its title; "An Exposure of the Idolatrous Blasphemies of the Church of Rome; proving the Mammon of its Spirit, and the Abominations of its Practice."

"A small thing of my own!" observed Mr. Richards, with a smile, meant for meekness. "One of my babes of grace, as it pleases Lady Lucy Knott to call them."

"And did you mean this tract for circulation among Roman Catholics?" inquired Mr. Spencer.

"Certainly; hundreds have been scattered on the highways."

"Where they remained, I'll answer for it," said Mr. Spencer, frankly. "Surely no one would feel inclined to read that which commenced by insulting that which he respected most."

"The sword of the spirit shapes not its course according to the ways of the world," replied Abel Richards; "but I see you have been with the enemy; however, I shall pray for you; it is my duty, dear young gentleman. So like the family. Surely he will be yet in the fold!" then, having reserved, perhaps, the chief object of his visit to the end, he said, while he buttoned up his coat, "You have not fixed upon an agent, I think I heard. The land, Sir, is miserably under-let—it does the poor people harm to give them land at too low a rate; increases their careless habits; and there is no truth in them, Mr. Spencer—no truth; how can there be? Ah, popery—popery!—if you should require an agent, my knowledge of the country and its people are at your service; if not in any other way, as a friend."

Mr. Spencer could brook this no longer; he told Mr. Richards he intended to be his own agent, and rang the bell in a manner that admitted of no further parley.

It would be impossible to describe the varied changes of mind, or rather the various thoughts that passed through Mr. Spencer's mind during this eventful morning; and yet Lady Mary or Mr. Graves,—the old clergyman who had interested him so much on board the steamer,—could have seen nothing to wonder at or speculate upon; they were, as all the Irish gentry are, used to the beggars; they had never seen the country or the town with-

out them ; and truly, but for them, the streets of many of the country towns would have been lonely enough. Mr. Spencer fancied every man and woman he saw without shoes was a beggar, and thus exaggerated, if that indeed were possible, the extent of the misery which seemed to increase and multiply around him.

Everybody, that is every Irish body, knew that the Hacketts were ignorant, illiterate people ; low, and cunning, and bigoted in their way, as bitterly as Mr. Richards was in his. Mr. Spencer had "enjoyed," as Lady Mary O'Brien would certainly have called it, two rare specimens of the parties which have been worrying the kingdom of Ireland between them for the last two or three centuries ; he had seen, face to face, two of the most inveterate samples of *PARTY SPIRIT*, and was grieved and shocked at the exhibition ; but to those reared in the cauldron this was nothing new ; one party exalted the people into deities, the other depressed them into demons ; this was only as it always had been ; not, it is to be hoped, as it always will be ! Mr. Spencer clung to the prospect of meeting speedily with the class inclined to steer the middle course ; he had to learn, and bitter at last was the knowledge, that though there are many individuals who think and act justly towards their fellow-creatures, without reference to religion or politics, Ireland knew not, in any respect, in those days, the blessings of a middle class—or the legislation of a middle course. It was difficult for an Englishman, born with both eyes open, to understand this. A car driver endeavoured once to explain it thus : "A boy," he said, "can only sit on one side of a car !"

Edward Spencer—cool and quiet Edward Spencer—had a deep under-current of romance in his composition. Shrinking instinctively from every species of vulgarity, he felt a deep and earnest sympathy for the Irish peasant. He had read—written in letters of blood, which nothing but the sweep of an angel's wing can efface—the wrongs under which the Irish peasant has writhed and been crushed ; the oppressions under which he has laboured and starved. The legends of the people ; their music—a language which all the nations of the world understand—were familiar to him ;—they were more—they were beloved by him.

Already more disappointed and perplexed than he cared to confess to himself, particularly after Mr. Graves' warning, Edward, his eyes fixed on the irregularities of the houses opposite his windows, began at last to fancy that green—"grass-green"—which he had fixed upon to be his servants' liveries, while in Ireland, from the idea that being the *national* colour of the country it must be welcome everywhere, had caused him instead of being understood to be misunderstood. Mr. Spencer was not a popularity hunter ; but this had occurred to him, at his own quiet dwelling in Berkshire, Ripley Hall, as a delicate way of evincing the interest he felt in the Irish ; indeed, he had thought seriously about having a harp or a shamrock on the button ; his respect for

his family crest forbade this, and he contented himself with arraying the footman and groom who accompanied him to Ireland in emerald green. He felt already that he had made a mistake, that green was only the national colour of Ireland, *out* of Ireland, and in Ireland the colour of one party ; the substantial shibboleth ; the palpable war cry, as it were. He rang the bell for the papers. The newspaper “of our side” was brought to him ; he inquired for the other.

“ What did yer honour plaze to say ? ” asked the waiter, a keen, ductile, sharp-witted fellow, as Irish waiters generally are.

Mr. Spencer repeated his request. The man shut the door and advanced close up to where he sat ; then, raising his fingers to his lips in a low hissing tone, he pronounced the word “ Whisht ! ”

“ What do you mean ? ” asked Edward, amused at the mystery of the man’s manner.

“ Whisht, yer honour, or maybe it’s the walls or the roof that ’ill fall about us. Sure if *that* was brought into this house every customer we have would quit ; bedad, we darn’t look at the same side of the street with it. Lord help yer innocence, Sir, do ye think that any of them *here* would look at both sides of the question ? ”

Mr. Spencer laughed, and the waiter turned to withdraw ; but when he got as far as the door he crept stealthily back, and coming closer than English habits would permit a waiter to come, he said, “ Ye’re an honourable gentleman, and if ye would like (though it’s aginst the rules of the house), I don’t mind getting you one—on the sly.”

This offer was of course rejected, much to the man’s disappointment, and Mr. Spencer (who was obliged to wait for letters from the north) thought he would call and inquire if Lady Mary had left town as she intended. In the hope of escaping the beggars he hired an outside jaunting car, and—after the first five minutes, when the novelty was over of sitting on one slip of wood, while your feet dangle on another—he agreed in opinion with the driver, who, seeing he was a stranger, had taken the earliest opportunity of informing him, that “ these cars bate the world and all for convaynience ; for, in case of an accident, you are up and off in a minute.”

On inquiring at the residence of Lady Mary O’Brien, he was informed she had gone with Mr. Graves and his daughters to Blarney.

“ How long had Lady Mary been gone ? ”

“ About three quarters of an hour.”

“ Then,” said Mr. Spencer, “ I will go there too. That is the famous castle ? ”

“ Good luck to yer honour, it is.”

“ But I must have another car.”

“ Why so, plaze yer honour ? ” inquired the carman, taking his *dudeen* from his mouth, and looking over his shoulder to where Mr. Spencer stood.

"Why, really my friend," he replied, "I do not think your horse is *able* to go so far."

"She's the most *willing* baste upon Ireland's ground this minit, Sir, and knows every fut of the way blindfold, and never axes to stop, barring a gentleman like yourself would insist upon it, just to wash her mouth as well as her master's."

"Yours!" said Mr. Spencer, while re-arranging the "bottle-green cloak" on the seat, which, as he already found, was anything but a comfortable one.

"Ay, Sir! *the drop* comes as natural to my mouth as the water to hers. Don't think she can't go because she's rather thin; she's too much blood ever to make flesh, and run for the cup at 'the Curragh.'"

"She did not win it, though," said Mr. Spencer, glancing at the miserable-looking hack, trembling and starved, whom her master called "rather thin."

"We don't all win what we try for this side of the water, any way," replied the carman.

"That's thrue, Darby!" put in the servant who stood at the door of Lady Mary O'Brien's lodgings; "or it isn't there you'd be sitting now."

The driver gave a leer and a laugh, and jerking his ragged "big coat" by the collar, flourished his whip in the air, preparatory to bringing it down with another flourish upon the galled back of the poor jade, who set off at as fast a canter as she could maintain on three legs, the fourth being useless for all purposes of active motion.

"Hurroo!" he exclaimed; "Hurroo! for the honour of ould Ireland and Blarney Castle!"

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PRIEST OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

ALL along to the ascent called Sundays Well, a suburb of the "beautiful city," the car-driver managed to push his poor starveling to a canter; but the rapid pace did not prevent his fare from observing, that miserable as were the beggars in the leading streets, those of the suburbs were still more so. In England, residing in an agricultural district, he had only seen poverty in what might be called its "pictorial form," in the person of an aged widow receiving her weekly alms, or under the aspect of a group of rosy children, who, but that you were told so, would not have been imagined orphans. Sometimes a vagabond-looking fellow, dressed in an old checked shirt, a torn jacket, dirty trousers, bare feet, and a wide-leafed straw hat, with a piece of black coarse ferretting dangling from it, crossed the young magistrate's path; and if he could not give an account of himself, was committed as a rogue under the vagrant act. Or some poachers apprehended by his

neighbours' gamekeepers, when brought up for examination, pleaded poverty as an excuse. They had no cheese to their bread, and nothing to drink but water—so at least they said; and though they were punished, the poverty they talked of was alleviated; and if it was ascertained that they had actually been existing without meat once a day, the hamlet rang in sympathy with their privations.

Alas! alas! those who ran wolf-like, yet harmless, screaming after his car, seldom tasted animal food once a year. All they complained of was, that the old potato-crop was exhausted, and the new not yet come; and till it did, they must starve, "only for charity." In England, poverty at that time more particularly, was so great a shame, that it hid its face, and wept; but in Ireland, it breasted the breeze, and howled in the sunshine.

"Drive on—faster—faster!" exclaimed Mr. Spencer. "I cannot bear this!"

When they were fairly away from the suburb and its hordes, and the yelp of the last dog sounded like an echo, the man ceased to ply the whip or jerk the rein. He brought his bullet-like head round, so as to perceive that "the gentleman" had placed his elbow on his knee, and covered his face with his hand. His keen blue eye glanced again and again, and yielding at last to the curiosity and loquacity of a nature at once the most inquisitive and the most secret, he resolved to speak.

"We've got a pretty bit of road forinst us now, yer honour; and it's not overspread much with those dirty bits of cabins that do be *spiling* the look of the country on the quality."

"I cannot think that cottages spoil the look of the country," replied Edward; "surely some nice white cottages, with pretty little gardens, and one or two well-cropped fields to each, would add much to the beauty of that lovely river, and break to great advantage the formal outline of these young plantations."

Darby turned half round to see if the gentleman was in earnest, and then muttered "God bless him," with all his heart, adding: "I wish there were more of yer honour's mind. White cabins!—flower-gardens! Bedad! the only flower we ever look at is the blossom of the pratee! Oh, blessed Father!—one or two well-cropped fields! It's long since I heard such a thing as that *evened* to a poor man; but to see it is what I never expect. Is that the way it is where your honour comes from?"

"It is."

"Well—glory above!—think of that! And where's yer honour going afther ye see the castle and the curiosities?"

"I am going back to Cork," replied Mr. Spencer, amused at a familiarity so perfectly new to him, but which was far from being rude.

"Oh, I know that, Sir; but ye'r not going to stop always in Cork, are ye?"

"No! I am not."

"I ask your pardon, Sir: only one likes to know if the good

have a mind to stop in the country with us ; we rear enough of the other sort ourselves."

" I intend remaining in Ireland ; but not in Cork," answered Edward.

" Och ! murder !—the luck is laving the beautiful city altogether," sighed the driver. " I thought I might have the honour of being yer honour's coachman whenever ye wanted a car. There's a view, Sir ; there's meadows and cattle ; there's not finer cattle nor them in England, I'll go bail,—barring when we send them over. I brought ye the longest road on account of the beauty of the place ; it's not so good as the Black Pool one, but there's the world and all of differ in the beauty."

The poor horse, who had been going at his own pace—any but a swift one—passed by a woman with a basket of eggs on her arm, and a heavy blue cloak hanging over a heap of potatoes, which she carried on her back ; and then, by another, who offered Mr. Spencer chickens at twelve-pence a couple ; and at last they were overtaken by a lame piper.

" God save you, Jack ; where are you going ? " inquired the talkative carman.

In reply, a whisper passed between the driver and the wandering musician.

" Jack says, plaze yer honour," said the carman, " that if ye've any love for music, he'll be happy to introduce you to the minstrelsey of Ireland. He'll sit this side, and play ye into Blarney, unless ye'd rather have him the same side as yerself, to get the strength of the pipes into yer head at once."

Mr. Spencer had a kindly and gentle dread of wounding any one's feelings. All his life he had found a difficulty in saying " no," and anxious to observe Irish character of every grade, he consented to the proposal ; only saying, he thought he should hear the music to more advantage if the piper sat behind him.

While the man hitched himself up behind, Darby observed that a blast of Jack Sullivan's pipes would shake the roof off a church —especially if he'd had three or four stiff tumblers of good punch.

Mr. Spencer was asked what tune he preferred, and naming " St. Patrick's day," the two men gave a positive yell of delight ; while the driver, drawing up his horse with a jerk, which nearly brought it on its haunches, took off his hat, and pulling his forelock of shaggy hair, which seemed to hang down to be pulled, said,

" I hope I'm not making too free, but maybe it's yer honour that owns them two beautiful grass-green liveries that seemed so overtaken with the whiskey this afternoon."

Mr. Spencer confessed that his livery was green, and this was received with a still louder hurroo, and followed by a jabbering in genuine Irish.

While Edward for the first time understood the nature of the " sea-sickness," which the waiter at the hotel had assured him still " confined the poor fellows (his servants) to their beds, so that

they hadn't a leg to stand on," he began to fancy there really was a spell over these liveries, which in some shape or other were perpetually conjured up before him. Beautiful as the country was, he could not enjoy it, so unsettled had his thoughts become. The piper played his best, the carman stamped his feet—snapped his fingers—shouted "Success" and "Hurroo!" in time (as Edward supposed) to the *birr*, and wheeze, and groaning of the pipes, and ended by throwing the reins over the neck of the horse, leaving him to the exercise of his own judgment in all matters touching the journey, while he sprang into the road and performed a most characteristic and animated *jig* in the dust, covering the buckle—heeling and toeing—whirling his whip—hooping and jumping like a half maniac; at last exciting himself to the utmost, he threw his hat into the air—sent his "top coat" a summerset after it, and continued shaking his rags in the sunbeams, in the exuberance and animation inspired by the national tune, endeared to the rudest hearts, and so seldom appreciated by the high-born of the country; for "party tunes," are as marked in Ireland as "party colours!"

"Faith," said the piper, "you did that well; if his reverence saw you dance that hearty *jig*, there's nothing but his cloth would keep him off the floor."

"The kindness of his honour's words warmed me as much as your music, Jackey, my boy," replied Darby, while resuming his hat and coat. " Didn't the gentleman wish we had all white houses—and flower-knots—and cropped farms to live in, on the banks of the River Lee. And didn't he fling his money, God bless him, to the poor. And didn't he come to the country in grass-green, just to tache the tame nagurs not to be ashamed of the colour God put upon the hills and meadows. Well, it was a hearty *jig*, and has riz my heart out of the starvation; and now we'll foot it the rest of the road, and Jack, you can get down at the turn off to the town,—that *was* a town in my father's time, of grate account, a wonderful market for woollen goods, and as many as thirteen mills going about it; they went so fast that they soon war gone, like every thing else that's good."

They met several peasants returning from the village to Cork, and exchanged, of course, kind greetings with them all. The inquiry was also made if there were many "down at the priest's," and at last one merry bare-legged girl answered, that his reverence was not *in it* at all, but up at the castle with some grate quality from Cork.

"Yer honour's in luck," said the carman, and having dismissed the piper, he urged his "fine hunter" into one of its extraordinary canters, towards the bridge

"Where no water flows."

Mr. Spenceer, however, remembered the man's hint about "water" and "drop," and saying he would walk to the castle, told him to refresh himself and his beast, and come for him in an

hour. This was gladly acceded to, and the Englishman found himself for the first time alone in the fresh and fair pastures of Ireland.

Above where he trod, the pennons of the rival houses of the Macarthy and the Fitzgerald had floated, and the onslaught and war-cry been echoed from the rocks and caverns of the frowning keep. In more recent times, those fair and peaceful fields were ploughed by the rude artillery of the Puritan chief—in Ireland of most bitter, cruel, and accursed memory. Then, in the time of the second James, the fortress that had braved so nobly the crossbow, the battering-ram, and the cannon, was degraded into a prison. Since then, its glory has been gradually decaying. Edward Spencer paused before he reached the bridge, to look upon the “war-shaken” structure, scarred and hoary from feud and age, a monument gaunt and ghastly of those evil times when the might made the right. Although but the shadow of a structure of which the Macarthy might have been proud, it was a shadow that recalled the past. Antiquity had wreathed it in a shroud—washed away its scarlet stains—smoothed its rigidity into softness:—and the halls where the biting jest was answered by the as rapid sword, and where the harpers stirred hearts long since sleeping, to deeds of glory, or warmed them into love, are now so still that you can hear the wind of a swallow’s wing, or the twitter of the martin; while the whistle of the blackbird from the “sweet rock close,” pours into the ear a long-familiar melody. The jars, and jealousies, and party spirit of the morning, were all forgotten when Edward contemplated a ruin of which he had heard so much, but which now requires a knowledge of the past, to be appreciated as it deserves. He wandered into the “sweet rock close,” being assured by a girl who was milking cows, and offered him some milk, that he would meet his reverence and the company somewhere about.

One of Mr. Spence’s favourite plans with regard to Ireland, was to revive the forests, planting trees wherever they would grow; and he was exceedingly delighted to observe the immense size the evergreens had attained in this romantic wilderness. The afternoon was so sultry, that the shadow and coolness of the delicious retreat refreshed both his mind and body. If he could have forgotten the beggars, he would have been perfectly happy. Indeed, when he heard the clear, light, musical voice of Lady Mary O’Brien responding to the full rolling brogue, so ripe and rich, that he was convinced it could proceed from none other than the good hearty Priest of Blarney, he seemed to have lost all memory of the past in present enjoyment.

His “fair foe,” as he had frequently called her before she was married, when as a girl she visited his mother, now introduced him formally to Dean Graves and his daughters, and the venerable priest whom she designated as Father Jasper. As this was the first gentleman Edward Spencer had met of a class possessed of so much power and influence over his new country, even his desire

to be near and hear every word that dropped from Lady Mary O'Brien's lips, did not prevent his observing the old priest closely. His face was rosy and jovial, not overgrown or sensual, as painters are too fond of representing churchmen ; but fresh and fair withal. His eyes were bright, blue, sharp, and inquiring ; his mouth was loosely and carelessly formed ;—an imprudent mouth, speaking thoughts so freely, that Father Jasper never could have been a Jesuit. He took off his hat to permit the cool breeze to pass through his white hair, and then Edward did not wonder at his being what he had heard he was, a man learned in antiquities, and of so charitable a disposition, that he never was able to keep a second coat to his back—the organ of benevolence being only out-grown by that of veneration ; while large “imagination,” and two ugly lumps over his shaggy, restless eyebrows, indicated that minuteness of scrutiny in which people excel who are given to revive the dreams of the past, and make them realities of the present.

Father Jasper had been educated at St. Omer, and was fonder of introducing scraps of French into his conversation, than shreds and patches of Latin. But all he said and all he did bore reference to the glory of his native land. His genuine, earnest love of his country was quite beautiful to think of ; no matter whether you believed what he told you or not, you must believe *in him* ; he meant what he said—he firmly and truly thought that Ireland was formed on the model of Paradise, and was by no means inclined to hold in favour those who either neglected or insulted it. In one thing he was, indeed, a perfect Irishman : he never entertained the idea that to arrive at truth it was necessary to hear both sides of a question.

In theory, he would have annihilated every one who was not disposed to honour Ireland as he conceived she ought to be honoured : but in practice, he would live all his life on roots, rather than counsel the death of a chicken. He would attack the legislation of England towards Ireland with an ardour and violence which even past cruelties and present neglects could hardly justify in such a man—denying, of course, that harsh measures had been ever provoked ; and yet every “Saxon” stranger who visited his beloved Castle of Blarney was welcomed with genuine hospitality to his homely and abundant fare.

No one ever did the honours of ancient ruins like Father Jasper ; and the legendary information to be gleaned from his rhapsodies was so new and delightful that the little party hung upon his words, following him down the Witches' Stairs—to the veritable Druid's Altar—to the entrance of the Prison and the Well—up the great staircase, and down again—over the verdant pastures, studded with noble trees—towards the lake, the margin of which was one blaze of gold from the blossoms of the yellow water-lily. Dean Graves and Father Jasper conversed with perfect harmony, the one enjoying the classic, while the other delighted in the antiquarian, lore of his companion. They quoted

Irish, and Latin, and French, and "Moore's Melodies," beneath the shadow of one of Ireland's past glories.

"Is not that charming?" said Lady Mary to Edward Spencer, on whose arm she leaned; while Agnes and Elizabeth, the dean's graceful daughters, were gathering wild flowers. "Is not that charming—to see two leaders of such opposite faiths, conversing together and agreeing?"

"And why should they not?" said Edward; "and why always designate their separate creeds as *opposite*? Why not simply call them *different*?"

"Unfortunately, here they are so opposed as to be termed *opposite* with too much truth," was the reply; "and my right good old friends, although both of liberal minds, would not care to be seen walking in the streets of Cork, in the close and friendly converse they are now enjoying in the groves of Blarney. I assure you, I have watched both one and the other to avert the starting of topics that fiz and explode like bomb-shells, sometimes in the midst of most delightful and peaceful conversations. Of course, Father Jasper will ask you to dine with him to-day; and if you are fond of seeing national character, and do not dread losing your own, stay. But I warn you, if you do, you will be immediately identified with emancipators, if not with Whiteboys."

"And I *am* an emancipator," said Edward, firmly, and so loudly, that while the young ladies looked back and laughed, Lady Mary exclaimed,

"Hush; that is one of the quagmires which swallow up, just now, all friendly feeling. I am glad Father Jasper did not hear you, because his exultation might be painful to the dean; and I rejoice that your words did not reach the dean, because I want him to know you better, before you jar against his prejudices."

Edward called to mind at that moment the midnight conversation he had enjoyed with the old clergyman, and was sorely perplexed by the discrepancy; he might have known that the dean would speak more frankly to a Protestant and an Englishman, than he would venture to do to a woman or a Roman Catholic.

"Both men love their country," she continued; "but their views upon some great national questions are so different that, until you have observed us more closely, you would perhaps say that each loved *his party*, and included in the broad word 'country,'—as too many do—only those who thought exactly as he did. One thing, Mr. Spencer, I would particularly recommend, though it seems an unnecessary warning to an Englishman, —do not commit yourself to *any party* more than you have already done."

"More than I have already done, dear Lady Mary!" he exclaimed; "how can I have committed myself, when I have not a single Irish party feeling? How?" he repeated, earnestly; but at the moment Father Jasper interrupted the reply.

"Look," he said, "at the margin of the lake. Do you see a tall, slender figure, with a long pole; there is a rake at one end of it, and a strong net at the other. Observe how earnestly he rakes the sedgy and matted borders. He has made a little raft of drift wood, and sometimes may be seen steering it from place to place."

"Is he fishing?" inquired the dean.

"He just is," said Father Jasper; "fishing for what's more wanted in this country than perch or tench—gold! We believe in these parts that one of the Macarthys buried his plate and treasure in the lake, and that poor innocent creature often spends a week here, fishing for it. He's so harmless, that no one interrupts him; and he has such faith in some spell or charm he carries about him, that he goes into all spirit-places by moonbeam, or in the dark; fresh or fasting, no one harms him; and he'd tramp through the thick of the Whiteboys or of the yeomanry, without a 'Where go ye?' You might have seen his animal as you passed the gate—a Spanish ass, one which I believe your uncle, Mr. Spencer, gave him; for he had great delight in Masther Mat, and the beast's furniture is a curiosity; a long-backed spade and a rake, all manner and kinds of tools, and every penny he gets goes for them. I had a great dread of his coming here, at first, for those treasure-seekers are terrible fellows at rooting, not only about, but under, the venerable old walls; worse than the pigs, and, therefore, the greatest enemies antiquarians have in Ireland—except the road makers. Ah! the road makers! Lady Mary, they'd hammer every Ogham stone in the country into powder-pavement, if they had their own will and their own way. But, as I was saying, I was greatly in dread of him at first, until I entered into familiar discourse with him, and then I found he venerated the 'treasure tombs,' as he called them, and was careful and respectable in his ways and doings."

The priest went on to tell, how the man had been a schoolmaster, both in the North and South, following Mr. Spencer's late relatives from Donegal to Spencer Court; that he believed he was employed as a sort of tutor to some "young one" of the family—he had heard so; but after "the fever," he turned so light in his head that he now wandered through the country, seeking treasure from amid the ruins of the past, or in those deep waters which neither ebb nor flow—the silent, sleepless lakes.

The subject of their observation had quitted his occupation, and was approaching towards them, his rake balanced on his shoulder. His dress was of ancient black, worn and patched—but it *was* patched; and Edward Spencer rejoiced that the follower of *his* family had the propriety, however poor he might be, to mend his clothes. There was something peculiarly sweet and winning in his air and manner. Large gray eyes, so large as to occupy greater space than eyes are supposed to require, wandered, and then became fixed; and after looking deeply and searchingly for a time at some particular face or object, would wander away again, apparently without being at all enlightened by the scrutiny;

the face was long ; the nose, generally the defective feature in Irish physiognomy, was in this instance delicately, and even beautifully, formed ; and the mouth, too, was small, and might have been handsome, but for an almost perpetual trembling of the lips.

“ *Salve, Domine !* ” said the priest to the schoolmaster, whom, when Edward saw him closely, he could not call old ; for his dark chestnut hair fell abundantly around his throat, giving a peculiar, and rather distinguished air to the head.

“ *Salve,* ” he replied, bowing to the priest and the ladies.

The good dean shook him by the hand ; and leading him to Mr. Spencer, asked him if he had ever seen any one like that gentleman. His gaze, chill and meaningless as moonlight, was fixed upon Edward, and then removed to the face of Dean Graves.

“ *No,* ” he said, “ *he never had.* ”

“ *Are you quite sure, Domine ? Look again.* ”

“ *It may be that I have, a long time ago—a picture, I think, Miss Ellen showed me at Spencer Court.* ”

“ *Well—yes. And can you not guess, Matthew ?* ”

“ *No,* ” he answered ; “ *I always guess wrong, now ; I cannot guess.* ”

“ *It is the poor master’s nephew, Mat, Mr. Edward Spencer, of England.* ”

For an instant his face seemed convulsed ; his lips trembled violently ; then, falling on his knees, he burst into a loud fit of weeping, kissing the young man’s hands with evidence of the deepest affection. Edward was greatly moved, he could hardly tell why ; but it is truly delightful to obtain proof that those of our name and race, to whom we have succeeded, were honoured and beloved.

As the hour was already past at which the priest was to receive his guests, every endeavour short of personal violence was used by the good Father Jasper to compel all his visitors to remain with him for the day ; he set forth his fare with the hospitality of old times—there was a leg of mutton, the largest ever seen in Cork market, fit for the most delicate lady in Ireland “ *to pick ;* ” and if that was too much there were trifles of chickens and pickled pork, wine, too, for the ladies, and such whiskey ! a piper, and dinner laid piping hot by the time they’d get there. The Dean and Lady Mary both resisted, but her ladyship again assured Edward he ought to go : such scenes, she told him, were almost over even in Ireland—there were few of the old priests to be met with now ; and the rude but genuine hospitality was being fine-drawn in every direction, not to mention the destruction of friendly meetings by the increasing bitterness of party.

“ *Go,* ” she repeated, “ *by all means, but do not commit yourself to a party. I am very generous,* ” she continued, “ *to tell you this of those with whom my sympathies so entirely go ; but I would not have you trammeled in what I hope may be a long career of usefulness.* ”

Mr. Spencer, who could not leave Cork until he had received his expected letters, determined to take the lady's advice. And having obtained permission—most graciously accorded—to visit her the next day, he took Father Jasper's muscular arm and entered the village of Blarney.

There are few things in the actual world so touchingly beautiful as the respect and affection subsisting between the Roman Catholic priest and his flock ; those who know and observe the people cannot wonder at their strength and endurance ; from the cradle to the grave the priest is the peasant's adviser and his friend ; he knows all his concerns—not only the great business of his life, but its *minutiæ* ; his private cares and sorrows, his faults and his *crimes*, are all in the priest's keeping ; his judge, his advocate, his punisher, he is also his protector—very, very rarely his tyrant. Those who talk of the luxury of priest's fare now-a-days, and of its being drawn from the misery of the people, know little of his way of life, his narrow means, or the very limited number of his enjoyments. The pomp and circumstance of the Roman Catholic creed take hold of the Irishman's imagination ; and the sympathy and kindness of his priest win and keep his heart. When an ignorant Irish Roman Catholic becomes “bad to his priest,” he must be utterly lost to good ; for he holds no other faith, and has put aside all that stands between him and destruction. Such, at least, things were five-and-twenty years ago !

A very brief notice of the hospitable priest's dinner—plentiful to profusion—may suffice. It was a sort of heart rehearsal of the scenes of the olden time ; when the company was rudely, but plenteously, banqueted first, the vassals next, and the residue given to the palmers and pilgrims, the widows and orphans ; who, though despoiled of much, felt there was no feasting, of which they did not, in a measure, partake. There were toasts—the first, “the king,” “the only King of England who had entered Ireland without fire and sword ;” upon this there was much cheering, and the piper, who was in the room, began to play, “God save the king,” but *modulated* it into “St. Patrick's day,” after the third or fourth bar : then speeches were made, and toasts were given, amongst them the health of Mr. Spencer, proposed by Father Jasper himself, and in a way so touching that Edward felt ashamed of his emotion. With clasped hands and glistening eyes the old priest prayed, that in the young Englishman now by his side the poor might ever find a friend ; that all he asked of him was to see for himself, to think for himself, and to judge for himself ;—all which, of course, Edward declared, in a reply which drew down “thunders of applause,” he had come to the country determined to do. He was not aware that he had given utterance to any sentiments particularly liberal, and yet for every commonly just sentence there was a round of cheers—cheers, echoed by the servants at the door, and caught up and returned by the mob of carmen and beggars from below ; for some moments

after he sat down this vehement applause continued, and he could not avoid expressing to a gentleman on his right hand, who had been rather more quiet than his companions, his surprise at the enthusiasm that had followed his words.

"I am sure I said nothing that common justice would not demand," he observed.

"That's what has taken the rise out of them," answered the person to whom he spoke; "common justice is a most uncommon treat to us—what we don't look for nor expect. Common justice! upon my conscience after ye're twelve months in the country if you keep in the same mind, and are of the same mind with your words, you'll not wonder at an Irishman's enthusiasm, when you talk of doing him common justice."

Mr. Spencer did not relish the reply; but the song and the speech, and the steaming, boiling, scorching, animating, and most disturbing whiskey punch, circulated round and along, and across and over the table. As the evening advanced, the intellect and wit, the song, the jest, the repartee, and the bitter, desperate, and determined sarcasm that "scarified" without mercy, were each so great in their several ways, that Edward Spencer described the scene as drinking whiskey punch amid thunder and lightning. He never had a very distinct idea how he returned to his hotel that evening; he only remembered looking at the stars, and thinking they were all turned into shamrocks, and making a firm vow against whiskey punch the next morning, which he kept as religiously as the most temperate could desire in these, Heaven be thanked! more temperate days.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE RETROSPECT.

WE must consign Edward Spencer to the delights and hospitalities of Cork; while—careless of the "disturbed state of the country," giving only slight credence to daily records of fearful outrages, but placing firm reliance on the fact that, under all circumstances, the stranger is safe, by day or by night, on the mountain side, in the deep valley, whether sentinelled by soldier or Whiteboy—we journey to Spencer Court more rapidly than Betty Doyle, or the evil-thinking Abel Richards has done—although they have preceded us; and, on our way, entreat the reader to take a brief review of the past, that he may the better comprehend the bearings of the future.

Perhaps it has been borne in mind, that Spencer Court was inherited by Edward Spencer on the death of his father's eldest brother; his English property having been derived in right of his mother, who lived to see her only and much-beloved son of age; his father had captivated the heart of a young heiress at a ball in the city of Bath, when Bath was in its zenith. He was

called "handsome Spencer" until he was forty, and after that "Old Spencer," for a free and careless life made him aged before his time, and he died ere he had completed his forty-sixth year; his wife, still in the possession of youth and wealth, when tempted again and again to enter the "holy bonds," looked grave, and shook her head; and being once pressed to marry a second time, by a lady who had urged her own example as a reason why she should do so, saying—

"I have had three husbands, and been happy with them all."

She answered, "But they were not Irishmen!"

This reply was differently construed by those who heard it; but, whatever meaning she intended her words to convey, she remained a widow, and wore widow's weeds until they were exchanged for the coffin and the shroud. Mr. Spencer, of Spencer Court, possessed a considerable quantity of land on the borders of Cork and Kerry; land of great extent, but, except in a few instances, of little value, running up mountains and down into bogs, alternately sedgy and stony, at one time covered with the snowy blossoms of the wild-rush, and at others exhibiting a sole surface of dark brown peat, and long ranges of unprofitable mountain, where, according to a common saying, "the Kerry cow will never look up at a passing stranger for fear she should miss the bite." There were, however, on this picturesque estate, within the folds of the hills, and hid away in the dells and valleys, patches of verdure and cultivation, the more delightful from being unexpected; and as Spencer Court commanded good views of the magnificent mountains of "the kingdom," it was a desirable residence for a country gentleman, who had no inclination to rack-rent his land, to interfere with the domestic laws and regulations of the "Whiteboys," or any other boys, as long as they let him alone—was fond of hunting, and duck and snipe shooting, had a taste for the "pictorial," and did not consider it too far to send to Kenmare or Killarney every week for his letters and newspapers.

Mr. Spencer, of Spencer Court, was thought as handsome, but not as fortunate, as his brother; by some purchase, or intermarriage in old times, he inherited a small estate in the North, and upon one of his visits to Derry, had been smitten by the charms of a young lady of Scottish descent, who soon became Mrs. Spencer; and, accompanied by her sister, and a favourite servant, Margery Myler, returned with her husband to Spencer Court, bringing with them, also, sundry habits of thrift and forethought that were anything but popular in her southern home. In due time, however, the cabin-keepers, whether scattered through the glens, or pent up in wretched villages, which, for dirt and misery, when Mrs. Spencer first visited them, were more wretched than the kraals that travellers in the north of Europe picture with wondering disgust, became in a degree more comfortable, and the people better clothed. Mr. Spencer found them regular employment; and Mat—"Master Mat," a most efficient

schoolmaster—educated the children ; and that, too, in a particularly neat cottage, close to the porter's lodge, which, at the end of a “bohereen,” more than a mile distant from the high road, guarded the entrance to the avenue. There could be no doubt of Mrs. Spencer's desire to serve all who came within the sphere of her active and acute mind ; but many obstacles arose by degrees to impede her usefulness. First, she was disliked both by the peasantry and the gentry, because she was a northern, a Presbyterian, and the grand-daughter of a tradesman : then she disliked them, because they were southerns—the peasantry all Roman Catholics—the gentry “proud and stiff” church-goers, without a “bawbee they could legally call their own, if their debts were paid.” Neither party took much pains to conceal their opinion of the other ; bad roads and long distances furnished sufficient excuses for nothing more than the occasional interchange of visits between the ladies of the neighbouring families ; and Mr. Spencer being (for an Irishman) a very stick or stone as regarded every joy, except the joys of the field, and the more rare one, in those days, of seeing every cottier on his estate with a roof five feet above his head that would not let in rain, and a coat sound and without a patch on Sundays, turned a deaf ear towards many of his lady's complaints ; and, above all, towards her solicitations for the preferment of a young man, of the name of Richards, whom, by a considerable degree of pains and expense, she had at last drawn from the faith of his fathers. “Conversion” was, unfortunately, one of her schemes for the regeneration of her neighbourhood ; before she had overcome the prejudice against “the blood of the black North”—before time was given to show the advantages which result from cleanliness and thrift, and many cottage improvements—she set about proselytising ; and thus rendered the priest at once her enemy, and led the people to consider everything she gave as a price set upon their souls :—unfortunately Mrs. Spencer could not see, that according to his knowledge, the priest only did his duty by keeping together the flock committed to his charge ; she became as bitter against him as he was against her ; and this unhappy feeling, retarding the progress of her ordinary plans, was increased by her sister's forming an attachment for a young man of the faith she so abhorred, and of those wild habits which, long after the commencement of the present century, unfortunately distinguished the “squirearchy” of Ireland. This person's name was the very general, but always respected one of Macarthy, and, careless and thoughtless though he was, he had some noble qualities, which, under other circumstances, might have formed a fine and useful character. Between him and Annie Cumming, it was said, a private marriage had been solemnised by a priest or friar of a neighbouring parish ; at least, there was too certain evidence that the gentle and much-beloved woman ought to have been a wife ; and, as such, young Macarthy claimed her ; but Mrs. Spencer declared, that if there was a marriage, the difference of their religion rendered it null

and void—that she would rather see her sister dishonoured in her grave, than the wife of a “ Roman.” The young man endured grievous insult and injury at Spencer Court, and Mrs. Spencer contrived to get her sister out of the country, without his being able to discover where she had been sent. This unfortunate circumstance increased Mrs. Spencer’s unpopularity to such a degree, that her husband thought it better to leave Spencer Court altogether for a time:—which they did—first going to England, and then to “ the North.”

Young Macarthy, disappointed in the affection that might have saved him, and goaded by the insults he received, ran a sad and rapid race of dissipation, and, some four years afterwards, lost his life in a smuggling affair at Skibereen, much to the relief of the Spencers, who never would have considered themselves safe in his immediate neighbourhood. Some said one thing, and some another, as to the fate of poor Annie Cumming. It was well-known, however, that a son, to whom she had given birth, had been sent, an infant, to its father, who consigned it and its fortunes to the charge of his own mother—a woman rendered old by cares and disappointment, a widowed dweller in a dilapidated mountain house that had once been a residence suited to a lofty and powerful race. By her, however, the charge of the infant had been undertaken as a blessing, rather than a burden; a report was much credited that its mother had been compelled by her despotic sister to marry a burgher of Belfast, and that she had died a year or two afterwards; while many affirmed that she had entered a Portuguese convent, and was, for a number of years, “ all as one as a saint” in Lisbon.

Irish improvements need perpetual refreshing, and, above all, PATIENCE—untiring patience and good temper. Mrs. Spencer imagined that her various changes would have continued just as if she had been on the spot; and, to get rid of her importunities, Mr. Spencer, who, as his years increased and his habits became more indolent, would do or undo anything to avoid trouble, at last consented that Abel Richards should act in a capacity half bailiff, half steward—which he himself called “ agent,”—during an absence, certainly prolonged by Richards’ representations of the state of the country and the bitterness and ingratitude of the people—needful for his own purposes.

Mrs. Spencer believed, all the time, that this man, so odious to the inhabitants—first, because of his change of faith, but also on account of his harshness and injustice—was working miracles among the “ poor benighted people;” while, in reality, the only one, who, through evil report and good report, kept steadily on his course, was the quiet schoolmaster, instructing the urchins all day, even in the mysteries of Greek and Latin, which the Southerns prefer to English and writing, and turning a deaf ear to all Mr. Richards’ injunctions to initiate them into one creed, while their parents professed another.

“ I am, worthy Sir,” he would say, “ a teacher of the Vulgate—

of the common domestic branches of geography, writing, the use of the globes, arithmetic, and chronology, and well-skilled to lead the mind of the tyro into the labyrinths of algebra, and the heights and depths of Greek and Latin; but, worthy steward, I am no divine; I can read the word of God in black letter and common type; but I am not competent to expound it, nor to raise my voice in prayer, even in a congregation of infants; and, as to your praying and lecturing in this house, appropriated to what is secular and not divine, I will have none of it. There is Dean Graves on the right hand, and Mr. Duffy on the left; and if you want to teach what they, according to your thinking, cannot—open wide your own door, and minister; here I am master, and master I will remain, until dispossessed by the worthies who placed me herein."

Richards would have been but too happy to dispossess the domine; but Dean Graves was his steady friend; and so, after a few ineffectual attempts, he left him as much alone as he could leave any one who was peaceably and quietly inclined,—greatly pleased when Matthew's annual visit to his own part of the world took away the reproach which a good man ever is to a bad one. At last, after an absence of between seven and eight years, much to the man Richards' dismay and astonishment, the Spencers returned to Spencer Court, bringing with them a little girl of about five years old, whom they called Ellen Macdonnel; this child, whom they said they had adopted, was treated kindly and affectionately by Mr. Spencer, to whom on wet days, and when there was no company, she was a plaything and a companion. Mrs. Spencer had become more ascetic than ever, more inveterate against Catholicity, and gave ready ear to all that Richards told her, of the ingratitude of those who had nothing to be grateful for; her originally kind nature, incrusted as it was by a frigid manner, became at perpetual war with her prejudices; where she saw distress, she could not avoid relieving it; and then, usually, had the reminder from Mr. Richards, that she was "fostering popery," while those whom she relieved were prevented from feeling as they might have felt, by the reproaches she uttered against their religion.

Mr. Spencer's liberality of opinion unfortunately proceeded from what is by no means common in Ireland—a carelessness of both creeds, declaring, in his "*convivial* hours," (as they are falsely called) that he considered both to be the disturbers of the country, and one just as bad as the other. This was the fertile source of perpetual words, tears, reproaches, and storms, between the husband and wife, which they were sufficiently imprudent to permit the little Ellen to witness; while she, rendered still more observant by the absence of all childish sports, and loving Mr. Spencer more than she did his wife, imbibed much that she would have been better without. Mrs. Myler, the housekeeper, hated the child because of the trouble she gave her, and yet loved her for she could hardly tell what—a certain way she had of not only

twining round, but growing into everybody's heart; but Ellen Macdonnel's companion and friend was Master Mat, the schoolmaster, who devoted two hours daily to teaching her "the Vulgate," its accompaniments, and Latin, and generally gave an additional hour to Irish—illustrated by the varied legends and tales which a brain like that of the domine, outrageously overgrown in the organ of imagination, could remember or devise: this was the only education provided for the little *protégée*; and yet she threw upon it; her large, wild blue eyes beamed with intelligence; and her playfellows, a ragged mountain pony, "vicious to others but gentle to her," and a huge dog, whom she carried in her arms when she came to Spencer Court—a little curly puppy—could testify that they sooner tired of scampering over the hills and valleys than little Ellen. Sometimes Mrs. Spencer would say that Ellen should be sent to Dublin to school; but this was speedily overruled by her husband, who declared he hated educated women, and must speak to Master Mat not to overburden her mind. The only thing he wished her to learn was music, and in this she promised to excel; Mrs. Graves, the dean's wife, agreeing to teach her the notes if she could come so far to learn them: which she did, twice a week, flying three miles across the mountains on her pony, followed by her dog, and sometimes by "a runner" to see her safe. A gleeful child she was, fearless of all harm, imbibing with the pure air she breathed a wild spirit of liberty—that dweller of the mountain and the crag—now stoppin' on the road to twine her hat with heather, or crown it with a plume of the wild fox-glove, then diverging from the narrow path to make her pony ford a stream, or leap a chasm, hallooing to the eagle that soared above her, and cantering after the fox, who had enough to do to escape from her bold, brave dog Brano; then letting the bridle drop on the shaggy neck of her rough pony, she would clasp her little hands and sing, as she went more slowly along, one of the melodies of her native land, with a sweetness and a fervour that would make the turf-cutter pause in his work and bless her as she passed. It was a strange progress to a music lesson—notes learned upon the piano to be practised on the guitar, the only instrument she possessed, although a piano was often talked about during her first year of study. Yet after a time she did so much with the tinkling strings, that Mr. Spencer thought he liked the guitar better than any music in the world. But it was not only lessons in music that Ellen learned from her mountain rambles; she had hardly completed acquaintance with flats and sharps and bass and treble, when Mrs. Graves died; and though a period was put to her lessons, she still visited the glebe, for she was much beloved by the dean's daughters, who lent her books and music; thus her rides continued with almost as much regularity as during the life of Mrs. Graves. As she grew older her habits of observation strengthened; she knew every cottage, and the inmates of every cottage in the wild glens through which she rode; the ragged, half-naked children would watch, and

hurra when they caught the first wave of her plumed hat, for Ellen usually had a little basket slung to her saddle, freighted, if not with halfpence (which she used to coax from Mr. Spencer), with cold slim cakes, rolls of thin oaten bread, and, if the larder afforded nothing better, crusts and fragments of brown bread. If any one was ill, Ellen was the certain conveyor of wine and medicine, and not unfrequently of such articles of clothing as were most needed, and which she used very little ceremony in appropriating for benevolent purposes. Visiting the poor in this way, seeing their wretchedness with the clear, bright, sympathising eyes of youth, observing their exceeding patience under affliction, knowing that Mr. Richards not only exaggerated, but falsified every statement he made to her protectors, finding the priest—whom she constantly heard execrated as “the minister of a false and besotting faith,” “the enemy to his flock,” “the destroyer of their souls,” “the agent of sin”—finding this man constantly among the poor—seeing how he comforted, relieved, and advised them, and hearing the gentle, kindly words that fell from his lips, Ellen’s power of comparison gained strength by exercise, and although she could not see far beneath the surface in either case, her natural dislike of Richards aroused still more the exercise of a faculty which else might have remained dormant; and her feminine generosity directed her to respond to the claim of the weak and helpless. Mrs. Spencer had been at this dangerous period of poor Ellen’s life almost continually absorbed in the more gloomy and contracted views of sectarian religion, and that nearly to the exclusion of every natural and generous thought and feeling. A slow and lingering disease, against which she had struggled for years, was gradually draining away the springs of life, *and she knew it*; between her sufferings and her abstraction, Ellen might have continued to do as she had long been doing (except when for some particular act of self-will her rides were for a time abridged)—that is to say, whatever she pleased, had she not one morning offended Mr. Richards past forgiveness by saying, and in a very determined tone, “That for all he said to the contrary, she thought Father Duffy had as good a chance of salvation as he had himself—if not a better.”

Mr. Spencer, who was present when Ellen hazarded this speech, only laughed, and added, “That really he thought she *was* quite right.”

Richards looked thunder, and took the very earliest opportunity of informing Mrs. Spencer of the opinion she had so fearlessly expressed; and of insinuating that nothing but the interest he felt in the “sweet child” should force him to disturb the “angelic repose which diffused itself over the mind of such a suffering saint as Mrs. Spencer, but that he feared she (the child) was already contaminated by the scarlet pestilence of the Romish Church, and the sooner she was secured within the fold the better.”

This “securing within the fold” was accomplished by Ellen’s pony having his shoes taken off and being sent to grass, by her

being forbidden to pass the avenue gate unaccompanied by Mistress Myler, by her reading alone every day a portion of "The Book of Martyrs," and being questioned as to the heresies of the Church of Rome every morning after breakfast. But this, bitter as it was, was not all; Ellen Macdonnel had learned that she was not a stranger, with no tie but that of charity to bind her to the master and mistress of Spencer Court. She had learned that she was really the daughter of that Annie Cumming, who was also the mother of a lad, older than herself,—a young, brave mountaineer, a Macarthy, with a proud eye, and a proud step, far prouder than her own. She believed her parents to be both dead; at times she writhed under the feeling that she was insulted, by not being acknowledged; she began to feel that she at least was *honestly* born, yet she had never called her mother's sister "aunt;" though treated as a relative, she had never been acknowledged as such. When in her mountain rides she made the acquaintance of young Macarthy, and drawn towards him at first by the mysterious bond of natural affection, which in youth is far more potent than in after years, she had once mentioned his zeal and activity in procuring her a young eagle, the poor bird's neck was cruelly wrung, and she was told that a word spoken of him or to him would send her a homeless wanderer upon the world; for the first time, then, he was called her brother, coupled with so gross a distinction, that though Ellen hardly understood it, she thought, and inquired, till the whole truth was forced upon her mind. Though compelled to submit to the mandate of Mrs. Spencer, the opprobrium heaped upon an unoffending boy, and that boy *HER BROTHER*, her *mother's son*, however different his faith and training, seemed to her such hard injustice, that though she obeyed, she found many subtle ways of evading, the command. She certainly did not speak of Lawrence Macarthy, but they sometimes met, both under a degree of fear and restraint, which only cemented their affection; for old Mrs. Macarthy, the boy's grandmother, was no churl of deep and bitter curses against "the woman Spencer of Spencer Court," the "Presbyterian heretic," the "trading Saxon who dared to insult the blood and name of a Macarthy."

As the children advanced in years, their "bringing up" produced different results. Ellen became more thoughtful and refined; her feelings deepened. Lawrence grew more coarse, more daring; the change, from their meeting so seldom, was hardly known to themselves, and thus their affection remained undiminished.

At this period, Ellen's friend, the schoolmaster, was seized with a violent fever; when he recovered, his mind was even more shattered than his body: it was the first winter that Ellen had been confined to the immediate domain of Spencer Court; the little cabin children and their mothers were continually coming up from the glens and down from the mountains to know what ailed Miss Ellen, that they never saw her; and Richards, who could not endure the idea of any one enjoying what he had coveted, but

never tasted, tortured their inquiries of genuine Irish goodnature into evil spiritings—working through the “benighted cottagers.”

It must be confessed that Ellen submitted to this restraint with a very bad grace ; it was quite true she ought not to have been suffered to rove at will as she had done ; but everything at Spencer Court was either neglected or over done ; at last confinement and vexation, and the working of an “I will and I won’t” sort of nature paled poor Ellen’s cheek, and made Mr. Spencer uneasy when he looked at her ; he flew into one or two passions concerning want of exercise and sectarian bigotry, went out duck-shooting or hunting, and forgot the matter. But this system did not last for ever. One evening, when, with his legs stretched out before a blazing fire, the master of Spencer Court was thinking how like the plan of his estate in Donegal were the hills and hollows in the grate, and how much better whiskey punch was than punch of brandy, and deliberating whether he should stop at the third tumbler, or “mix” a fourth, Mistress Myler entered, curtesied down to the ground, advanced opposite to where he sat, and placing the tops of three fingers of the right hand upon the table, curtesied again—

“The madam, Sir,” she said, and from the pleat of her snowy cap down to the tongue of her shoe buckle, Mistress Myler was precision itself—the most unpopular of all qualities in the south ; “the madam, Sir, is in a weak and wavering state this evening, and if it’s your pleasure, Sir, she’d be happy to have a few minutes’ interchange of sentiments with you.”

“Very well, Peggy,” replied her master, “I’ll just mix half a tumbler, and go.”

Mistress Myler looked at her master, and, advancing still nearer, urged him against delay, as “the madam was really ill.”

“So she has been these three years,” he replied.

“The master,” she answered, “would do what he pleased ; but the madam was all but speechless.” Upon this, Mr. Spencer sprang up, to the great inconvenience of a cross Scotch terrier, who had been sleeping on the hearth, and who snapped so heartily at his leg, that he returned the compliment by as hearty a kick, and cursing it, in no gentle terms, for a “Scotch Presbyterian brute,” hurried up-stairs. He looked for a moment on the convulsed features of one he had dearly loved, and, thoroughly roused to a sense of her danger, rushed down, directing an express to be sent off immediately for a physician, and another for Dean Graves ; careless as he was of religious observances, when he feared the end was at hand he turned at once for aid to a minister of the gospel. Having given these brief directions, he returned to his wife’s bedside. Ellen was kneeling there, weeping over a hand whose protection had at times pressed upon her with iron grasp ; but she loved it at that moment more than she had ever done before ; all her own petulance and wilfulness—her opposition and stubbornness—rose in judgment against her, while all Mrs. Spencer’s neglect and hardness were forgotten ; the poor lady

seemed unconscious of what was passing ; once only, mingled with some half uttered texts of Scripture and snatches of hymns, she said, "Ellen—poor child!—no friend—no mother!" Mr. Spencer poured forth his assurances that Ellen should never want either—that he would provide for her. "Then do it," answered the dying woman, "do it, and don't talk—but do it—and at once." As she said these words, an old female servant entered, and whispered Mr. Spencer that the butler had gone off express for the doctor, but that the coachman and all the other "boys" having gone to a wedding hard by Glen Flesk, there was no "mankind" of any sort to go for Dean Graves. Mistress Myler suggested that Mr. Richards could pray ; but Mr. Spencer roughly replied that, sooner than *that* should be done, he would pray himself.

"I will go," said Ellen ; "I fear nothing, and there is nothing to fear."

In a few moments she had saddled one of the hunters, and was flying across the country, followed by her faithful dog, who whirled and sprang about in the moonlight, and could hardly keep pace with the speed of the gallant and docile horse, who heeded the young girl's weight no more than if a wild bird had rested on his shoulder. She was quickly on her homeward road, accompanied by the clergyman, whom she urged repeatedly to a more rapid pace than even his well-trained horse desired. They were now within sight of Spencer Court ; several lights were gleaming like stars in the heavy pile of building which loomed upon the landscape, its chimneys and gables standing out against the sky. Rapidly they descended into the valley ; and the rush of the mountain stream they had to cross before they ascended the rising ground upon which Spencer Court stood, sounded like the murmurs of distant thunder ; they could see the splash and foam of the water as it dashed—the unsleeping thing!—over its rocky bed.

"Do you know exactly where the ford is, Ellen ?" inquired the dean, as he reined up his horse.

"Anyhow, Sir ; follow Bran," she replied. Bran had taken the stream a little below where the clergyman paused ; they could see this distinctly, for they were so close to the water, that the heated animal wanted to drink. Suddenly, however, the dog wheeled round and returned, and as suddenly sprang, all dripping as he was, upon the neck of Ellen's horse. The horse reared and plunged ; the girl threw the dog off, and kept her seat.

Both the dean and Ellen urged their horses forward ; but the animals would not stir a step ; the light clouds that had been floating through the sky were so fleecy and transparent, that the stars sparkled amid their folds ; one or two of a more sombre character occasionally passed across the moon ; but the night was, on the whole, remarkably clear and calm ; there were no large, heavy, drifting clouds to produce the shadows which so bewilder the eyes at night ; and both the dean and Ellen could see the sheep grazing on the hill-side opposite. Still the horses, though

evidently most willing to retrace the path they had descended, would not cross the ford, and Bran shook and trembled by the side of his young mistress, who vainly endeavoured to rouse him, by exclaiming, “In, good dog, in!—forward Brano!” It was of no use; neither horses nor dog would cross the ford. Suddenly their attention was called away from the animals, whose obstinacy at such a time was so distressing, by a clapping, as if of hands, on the opposite side. Ellen fixed herself more firmly in the saddle, and turned her face towards the dean, who sent a loud “halloo!” across the brawling stream; this was answered by a scream—loud and long—as of a woman in bitter trouble; it was, in fact, a “keen,” a regular “ullagawn”—long and protracted—first loud, then dying away—then swelling loud again; and while they both gazed steadfastly towards the other side, they distinctly saw a woman, whose cloak floated behind her—not with the heaviness of cloth drapery, but light as a silken web—glide along the bank, to the spot where there was a natural fall of some depth; the fall was clearly visible from the mass of white foam that frothed and spun about in the moonlight, as the water went tossing in mad sport over the rocks. The figure paused, and again they heard the clapping of hands, although *then* it was more distant, and so faint, that instead of striking the ear, as it at first had done, they were obliged to listen for it.

Neither the dean nor Ellen spoke; but they felt their horses tremble beneath them; the sound ceased, or at least they heard it no longer; but the figure, instead of continuing its course along the bank of the river, stept, as it were, on the ledge of the fall, and so glided—on—on—on—towards their side of the stream, amid the dashing of the spray, and the rolling and foaming of the fall—erect—firm—treading where no mortal foot could tread. As it thus passed, it became almost transparent—a mere shadow—tossing its spectral arms above its kerchiefed head; while ever and anon the wail and the shriek, fainter and still more faint, seemed fading upon the ear, as the mysterious form vanished altogether from the eye.

The horses now dashed through the ford of their own will; but Ellen’s momentary terror did not prevent her looking back. “Turn, Sir, turn!” she exclaimed, riding close up to Dean Graves—“turn! She is on the hill now, in the Macarthy pass, as they call it; and now—she is gone—hark! you can still hear the cry.”

“An optical deception, Ellen,” said the dean, drawing his breath heavily, as if a great weight was removed from off his bosom.

“No, no,” answered the girl; “you know it was not *that*, Sir; you say that to prevent my being frightened; but we heard, as well as saw. I know what it is.”

“You have imbibed wild notions, Ellen, among these mountains. You would persuade yourself it was a Banshee, wailing for poor Mrs. Spencer.”

THE WHITEBOY;

"I would *not*, Sir—I would not. None of *them* will wail for such new families; *they* know better than that; they will cry fer the head of an ancient house, though he die beneath a roof of straw; but they offer no homage to the alien."

At any other time the dean would have asked her what she meant by "alien;" but, strange as it was, the man was less composed than the girl. When they turned into the road leading more directly to Spencer Court, they met a traveller, buttoned up to the throat in a close riding-coat, plying a heavy whip on a lazy horse, too fat either to gallop, canter, or even trot. A youth, also mounted, but on a rough pony, rode by his side.

"Miss Ellen!" exclaimed the boy.

"What, Lawrence!" she answered.

"Mr. Duffy, I believe," said the dean, drawing up his horse.

"Ay, Sir!" was the reply. "I fear we are on the same mission to different houses. Poor Mrs. Macarthy, of the Inch, *isn't expected*—indeed I must ride hard to overtake her—so God speed you, Sir!"

"Good night!" answered the dean—"but," he added, "mind how you pass the ford."

"What ails it?" inquired the priest.

"Oh, nothing," said the dean, "but we found it difficult to get the horses over."

"An Ultagawn is gone up the hill," said Ellen, in a depressed tone, "which you will find it hard to overtake."

"God be between us and harm," muttered Father Duffy, crossing himself. The youth also murmured some words of the same kind, and performed the same ceremony. Then again they exchanged greetings, and urged their horses on in opposite directions.

Without further interruption the dean and Ellen arrived at Spencer Court.

"The mistress has made no fight at all against death," said the woman, who, shading the candle with her hand, from "the blast of the door," attended to light them up stairs. "She's been asking afther you, Miss, and I am sure the breath will not lave her till you're by her side. Oh!" continued the old creature, talking in a muttering tone to herself, as she sat down on "the head of the stairs"—after they had passed into the chamber of death—"Oh dear, sure it's wonderful how the rich, like her, lets their hearts go waste, day afther day, day afther day, without loving anything—at least without letting on they do; and then they're troubled at the latther end, and want to make up for it—but they don't get the time—and why would they, more than anybody else? Wouldn't the prayers of the poor go before her—if she had 'em—and clear her path to Heaven? She'll have a grand funeral, I'll go bail—there'll be more people than prayers, and sorra a one will ever trouble her grave for the sake of the ashes—that's a sure thing. Whisht! I wouldn't say that's not Dinneen and the

doctor. Och, hone? How many have died of the faver since harvest, without any doctoring but death: and the croak of the raven, or the wild crow, the only cry at their berring! Oh, wisha! but it's cowld comfort here—and cowld everywhere; death sends a shiver through the house; and though it's little good she did for any one lately—they say she wasn't always so. Sure myself hardly knows, and I from another part—the Lord have mercy on her! and God forgive me for the prayer. They'll be all *blind* by the time they get home from Gracey Flyn's wedding—grate luck they have—a wedding and a berring in one week.” She then took a pin out of her “bedgown,” and poked the candle-wick straight, saying, that if Mistress Myler came out, she'd fly at her like a tiger for not sitting in the dark, as she herself would sit—betwixt death and the devil—to save an inch of light.

The crone—who was one of those innumerable hangers-on, to the destruction of thrift and good order, whom it would be much cheaper and happier for masters and servants to pension than to keep—having “settled” the candle, pulled out her “decket of beads;” intermingling her appointed prayers with sundry observations as to the length of time “the mistress” was dying, and exclamations of astonishment as to the tardiness of Dinneen, the doctor, and those who had gone to the wedding. At last, Dean Graves almost forced Mr. Spencer from the room; and, through the half-opened door, came the sobs of Ellen Macdonnel, and the hysterical cries of Margaret Myler.

The crone crept into the chamber of death. Both Ellen and the housekeeper were kneeling by the bedside.

“I've seen a poorer woman make a purtier corpse,” muttered Katty; and then she cast a keen, quick glance round the room, and fixed her eyes on some brandy-and-water which had moistened lips that would soon be kissed by the red earth-worm. She crept like a cat to the table, and drank it off. “If that's quality wine, it's cowld—there's no spirit of the mountain in it,” she thought; and then looked with more curiosity round the apartment. Mr. Spencer's purse lay on the table, and silver was scattered about where it had been hastily and heedlessly thrown. Yet, though Katty could not withstand the temptation of the “drink,” she felt no desire to touch the money, but laid her hand kindly and gently on Ellen's shoulder. “Rise up, Miss agra!” she said, “rise up, and the Lord will strengthen ye. Don't take on that-a-way, dear—nor don't murne; sure it's a blessin' to be taken before ye'r made to feel ye've lived too long, which, fait, some of us might do when we are born—with poor Ireland for a country. Oh! she'll have a grand wake, and a wonderful funeral; so take up yer heart, dear, and don't let the sorrow tramp it.”

But still Ellen and Mistress Myler wept on, and the crone crept out as she had crept in, stealthily; looking back, she muttered, “To think of Peg Myler—I'm sure it's vinegar she's crying; but my heart aches for the poor young lady. Augh! she has a troubled look on her. God help us, and I've seen many a purtier

corpse, with nothin' but God's curtain above it; but she'll be worth seeing when she's *laid out* ! Augh! and the poor masther—he'll be twice as good now she's gone; and that's a hard saying of a woman ! ”

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE OLD PEOPLE.

IN all situations, and under all circumstances, there is something terribly appalling in the aspect of death:—to look upon the fair young face robbed of the last tint of life—the rigid brow—the stiff and unyielding fingers—the thrilling, “icy cold” of the beloved lips, so lately eloquent of music—of love—of life; and yet, blessed are they who die young; whom evil passions have not corrupted, nor evil thoughts defiled! Ah! there is much for which to be thankful, when we kneel by the young death-bed. Still, its silent, stern, rigid power is terrible; terrible even when we look beyond the grave—the one great certainty of existence! Death is fearful wherever met. However high they heap the pyre, however loud the cries, the dark vanquisher is there; though crumbled to the mouldering ashes which the lightest breeze may mingle with the air; scattering instantly and for ever every vestige of humanity. The abandoned corpse left alone on the wild heath, or in the tangtled and howling wood, if not devoured, perishing by loathsome degrees: the rouged, and ornamented, and perfumed remains dressed for the funeral as if for a feast! death—death—is the same with them all!

Though in modern times, all classes of mankind “bury their dead,” in no country are the customs attendant upon the solemn rite so different, or so opposite as they are in Ireland; the Celt retaining much of the ancient formalities, mingling the old superstitions with the elaborate ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, while the Saxon retains the simple dignity which best accords with the reformed faith.

At the moment when Mrs. Spencer closed her eyes on this world, many of the adherents of the Macarthy were anxiously watching the arrival of Father Duffy, praying he might come in time to administer “the rites of the Church” to the dying mistress of the ancient walls, within whose enclosure the harp, the pipe, and the wild revelry of Irish hospitality had once held undisputed sway.

All that remained of the building, which had been very extensive, was a tall, narrow tower, and the lower portion of one side of what originally formed the square of the court-yard, the rude but stately entrance to which had gone to decay; the arch had fallen, the marks of hinges and bolts alone telling where the gate had hung; the lower story of the remaining side was roofed in, and formed the kitchen and “servants’ offices;” but the “Ould

Madam," as she was called, could afford little money for service : yet she never wanted such rude assistance as the surrounding poor could render. There were always plenty of "neighbours," and "neighbours' children," who held it "a labour of love" to run up to "the castle" to help the "Ould Madam" a bit, or rather to help Esther, the rheumatic and ague-stricken creature who had "followed" the family for more than forty years ; the people, too, "cut her turf," planted and dug her potatoes, and performed the various acts of husbandry necessary to the cultivation of the few mountain acres left by confiscation and extravagance of the vast possessions which the solitary castle overlooked. Katherine Macarthy had never affected state : yet there was a formal bearing about her in the simple garb of widowhood, an instinctive stateliness, a halo of old memories around her gray head, and a native command in her deep blue, determined eyes, which bespoke a natural and conscious dignity that poverty had failed to subdue.

The ill-lighted and inconvenient rooms of the tower were considered as state chambers ; the lower being her sitting-room. The rude, geometrical stone stairs led to the bedroom in which she awaited her final summons. The small apartments above were occupied by her grandson ; one, as a sleeping-chamber, another, as a sort of oratory, inasmuch as it contained a crucifix, an altartable, and some devotional books, to which a corner was given, where they were preserved in neatness and good order ; but the walls were hung with old-fashioned implements of the chase ; among which a long rifle, mounted and studded with silver, two curiously-wrought pistols, a pair of beautiful spurs, and a *couteau-de-chasse*, were the most remarkable. A few books were carelessly piled on the shelves of a carved, worm-eaten cabinet, surmounted by a flag-staff, round which hung, or rather mouldered, the remains of what had been a richly-embroidered standard ; the silk seemingly held together by the golden thread in which the harp-strings were worked, its less perishing nature preserving the form so dear to every Irish heart. The rough oak beams which composed the floor were furrowed by time. A chest of the same age and manufacture as the cabinet, and two equally venerable chairs, composed the furniture of the antique chamber, into which, through a long narrow window, the moonlight streamed.

The room was calculated to excite much sympathy with the past ; and there would have been no evidence that gentle or juvenile feeling found a home therein, but that a cage, containing a little bird, hung within a deep embrasure of the wall. Even in that room, overlooking the valleys and passes of the district, once the territory of the Macarthy, the murmurs of those who waited and watched beneath might be heard, mingled with many a deep exclamation of sorrow and a half-stifled "Ulla-gawn," echoing the wild cry of the Banshee, which had terrified the dean and Ellen while on the road to Spencer Court. The chamber of the dying lady was like the apartment of her grand-

son, dedicated to gone-by and faded things ; the lofty bed, from which depended the curtains, or rather the remains of tapestry converted to that use ; the coverlet, thin and modern, heavy enough for the sufferer who could hardly endure its pressure, yet flimsy and cold for winter ; tattered carpets and broken chairs ;—such were the chief “garnishings ;” although a couple of beautiful chirra bowls, and an engraved glass mounted in silver, stood on the dressing-table. The still living wreck of this ancient house lay silent—gasping, not struggling ; and yet, with a rigid defiance, refusing to yield to death the trembling homage which Mrs. Spencer—the woman whom Katherine Macarthy most hated in the world—had already paid.

When the priest was announced, the dying woman revived. Her head and heart bent before the only earthly power she acknowledged ; and though her spiritual director remained much longer than was expected—so long that the watchers without whispered to each other that “The Madam must have felt it sore to make a clean breast, to say nothing of humbling the heart”—still, when her grandson was permitted to enter, she was sufficiently strong to speak, and to bless him with unusual earnestness and fondness ; exhibiting towards the weeping youth, who knelt by the bedside of his only relative, greater tenderness during the last few minutes of her existence than she had shown since the time his insulted and impetuous father resigned him to her care ; for much trouble had iced her nature, and her ordinary manner was not like the manner of her country. At first, she spoke coherently, but after a short time, her sentences came broken and wild, mingling the past with the present. She spoke to Lawrence of his father—her own, only, brave, handsome boy, with sunshine in his eyes, and the spring of a mountain deer in his feet ; of his high, pure blood, glowing through his fair skin, “like the red wine on snow ;” HER son, the representative of a thousand princes—and then the tone of exultation sunk, and her face darkened with the darkness of a curse, and the words hissed forth from her lips ; few, but bitter :—forgetting himself, she said, “he loved” the heretic and the stranger ; he loved but he did not deceive her—he married her ; remember *that* ; yet, he was cast forth by the up-start ; blown on by the north blast that withered our green fields—but *your* mother was *his* wife. He did great folly but *no sin* ; folly, to mix name and blood with those who had neither—but *no sin*. Stand before me, boy, that I may look upon the last—last—of our long race !” Her grandson stood as she desired, but she saw him not ; the film of death was over her eyes, and she groped with her spectral hands until her fingers twisted in the long curls of his silken hair ; then, disengaging them, she sighed bitterly, and said :

“I leave you nothing but our misery ; purse, and house, and all, are empty. There is neither silver, nor gold, nor houses, nor land ;—nothing remains to the Macarthy but the wide, cold, stranger world and the blessings of a crushed and broken-

hearted people. Kings and princes once—outlawed and insulted now." She raised herself suddenly, and extended her arm.

" Why was it, Madam?—not good enough for your sister—ah! ah! ah! *Your* charities cover sins?—no—no—they are steeped in blood—mildewed with curses! I never said I'd forgive you! Trample on us! because we are true to our faith, and dispute with *you* strangers the sod of which *we* are made. Go, Lawrence, fill your purse elsewhere! Look, some become brawlers, who might be patriots—I thought to see your father a patriot:—but go, take your father's rifle, my grandfather's sword, the old flag too, wrap *that* round your body, with the harp next your heart; so that, if the time comes, you are ready!—

" You all see how I die—a Macarthy!—all but nameless—here I sit—a poor, old, blind, dying woman;—but still," and her voice raised to the highest pitch of weakness, screamed forth again and again, " *still*—a Macarthy. Never forget your name—or your country, Lawrence—never!"

Those who listened without the half-open door—and the excited youth, whose tears dried as quickly as they were shed on his hot cheek—agreed that as she pronounced the last word "Never," the wild wail and clapping of hands—the cry of the Banshee, that weird and faithful follower who honours antiquity, that voice of lonely sympathy, filled the castle, and frightened the owls from their nestings in the ivy. The birds hooted and flapped against the window, and Lawrence rushed to look out into the court-yard, fancying at the moment, so loud and distinct was the "Ullagawn," that he might see the being who at the moment raised "the cry." Those who were without came in; old women—pale and trembling—while young girls fell on their knees and crossed themselves. The dying woman sunk back upon her pillow; the excitement, which had given to her countenance a terrible expression, faded from it; and though there was no resignation, a silent calm changed the expression as by magic.

" I come!" she said, and the broken, but unsubdued spirit of the old chieftainess was gone! Then, indeed, the wailing commenced within the tower—deep and bitter—the women shrieking and tearing their hair; but no shriek uttered by mortal lips was like unto "the cry"—the agonised cry of the great mystery—believed in as faithfully as the records of Holy Writ!

An hour afterwards, Lawrence found himself in his chamber—alone—quite, quite alone—his wild spirit at fierce war with circumstances—his hot, high blood beating indignantly in every vein; with all the pride and all the aches after station that belong of right to old descent, yet shut out by the then existing laws from every path that led to honourable distinction;—brought up like a young eagle by its parent bird, nurtured in the superstitions of a faith to which he clung the more closely, because of the contempt in which it was held by those whom—and with fair show of justice—he considered enemies.

The whole state of the country is much changed since then ; but there were hundreds of youths in the mountain fastnesses and the wild valleys of Ireland, who felt as Lawrence felt ; who, instructed only by the past, and with but limited knowledge of the influence of moral power, believed they had nothing to hope except from wild outbursts of violent resistance ;—and whose nobler qualities were so obstructed in their growth as to become deformities — even as the forest sapling that lacks head-room degenerates into the stunted and distorted underwood.

Various contending passions shook the mind of young Macarthy before he had strength to sustain such agitation. The disgrace which the gentry affixed to his birth long festered in his mind ; and though his grandmother's words reassured him, he well knew they would not assure others. For nearly an hour he paced his little chamber, his eyes sometimes resting upon the chest which contained the parchments and mouldering documents of his faded family's honours. His head full of hatred and revenge, against he could not define what, burning and beating ; at last, such tears as frequently accompany the high resolve which God pours into the heart, in His own efficient and mysterious way, burst from his eyes ; and the more he wept, the more the undefined feelings of revenge and violence were subdued. Deprived of his only relative, his young heart trembled while it turned toward his sister—not the child of his father, certainly—but the child of his mother ; of that mother whom, wild boy though he was, he had seen in his dreams—wondering if Ellen resembled her. Then, when his tears were dried, and his heart was again hardened, the thought of Ellen, as the “young lady,” the favourite and plaything of a luxurious house—cushioned in down—lapped at ease—nurtured in contempt of his education, and in hatred of his race and his religion—came upon him with frightful force ; and her gentleness—her fervour—her pure, fresh, Irish enthusiasm (that bright and earnest evidence of a noble mind)—her sympathy with the poor, were all forgotten, and he whispered to himself, “Whether Mrs. Spencer lives or dies, Ellen cares not for me ; she can be no sister to poverty such as this ; no partner in a struggle for freedom — the gulf is fixed between us !” He little deemed that at that very moment Ellen would have yielded up the stateliness of Spencer Court—the probable and the real—for one kind pressure of her brother's hand, one fond word from his proud lips.

Alas ! they were not the only children born of the same bosom who have been estranged by the injustice of party spirit, or sternly divided by the blind zeal of what was intended not to sever, but to unite. Often had Lawrence turned over the deeds and parchments in the old carved chest, until he became familiar with their contents. But it needed not them to point out the ancient boundaries of the forfeited estates. The idea of leaving the old walls was accompanied by so bitter a pang, that he did not venture to think of it a second time. He was overwhelmed

by his first great sorrow—it was the first time he had looked on death—and what a death it was, the death of the only relative he had ever known! One to whom the custom of the country had taught him to look with veneration;—a stern revengeful woman; one, almost the last with national feelings and national perfections; one who, if prosperous, would have been widely benevolent and generous to her friends, but whom adversity and wrong had rendered harsh and unforgiving.

Esther, in all her confusion, had not forgotten “her darling young master,” and she brought him a lamp and some refreshment. The news that Madam was dead spread rapidly; and throughout the night peasants kept arriving within the court-yard, each woman raising the death cry before she dropped on her knees at the entrance to the castle. A crucifix hung at the head of the bed, and the corpse was decked with the usual black ribbons—the flaring candles threw a disordered light upon the features which, for the first time, seemed as placid as they were dignified. The priest had prayed, and the *ban caointhe*, or chief keener, had assumed her place beside the head of the bed.

She was one well-versed in the old history of the family; and if aught had been wanting to rouse the revengeful and evil passions of a young man, stung by a sense of poverty and degradation, it was the *ban caointhe*’s lamentation and recapitulation of Saxon injury and Saxon hatred—into which no view but the one was permitted to enter; and which, appealing to prejudice and hatred only, was received as inspired truth by eager listeners. Even the men, who in general suffer the women to “keen” as long as they please without taking note of what they say, now listened attentively; and every time her voice sunk, there was a chorus of wrathful comments: “Wisha, hear to that now!” “Well! She knows all.” “It’s all true.” “Boys, how do we ever stand it?” “To be put upon as we are!” “Well, glory be to God, we’ll wait His time!”

Her “cry” contained allusions to the history of the family—and its leading chiefs for ages—with regard to dates; rudely, yet not unpoetically, strung together.

Commencing with the usual question, “Why did you die?” She framed her replies. “Why did you die? dark-haired daughter of kings. Why?

“Ask not again! What had *she* to keep her from those of her proud race, who are now suns in heaven? Only one bright child, the child of a Macarthy—of him her only, only one—the young eagle—struck down by a poisoned arrow, with a broken heart! A curse on them that broke it! Only one young boy was left to the lady, whose hair, once as black as the raven’s wing, is now soft and colourless as the white cloud upon the Reeks—one young boy! but his hands were weak, and his voice feeble. Ah, woe and wail! he could not keep the great soul from its sister spirits.

“Dark-haired daughter of kings; why did you leave your

castle, the only castle where there still lived a Macarthy? Who now calls out the echoes of broad Iveragh? Who fishes the brimming waters of the Laune? Who dwells within the castle of Palice—the Caislean-va-carthy? Whose banner floats over the proud walls of Carrig-a-droid, which the Macarthy built in a single week to pleasure the fair lady of his love. Ah, woe and wail!

“The echoes of Iveragh will not repeat the Saxon name. The waters of the Laune are dark from the shadows of the thick trees; and salt, from the tears shed by the enslaved of her noble race. The Caislean-va-carthy is wracked by the Saxon’s breath; and the banner of Carrig-a-droid is the wing of the hoarse raven.

“Dark-haired daughter of kings, why did you leave your lands?

“Hark! how her spirit laughs. ‘My lands!’—what lands? The child of a Macarthy—the widow of a Macarthy—the mother of a Macarthy—has no lands; they have taken and spoiled them! A few fields, such as her people would grant to a gallows-glass, were all that was left to the blood of Dermot Macarthy More, who sleeps at Innisfallen!

“Where are the lands of Carrigvahan? Where those of Cormac Laidir—the strong Macarthy, who built the castle of soft words, and the holy abbey of Kilcrea? Where the lands of him who set his foot on the neck of the Geraldine? of him who humbled the proud Desmond? the sound of whose voice could bring three thousand true-hearted men to the war cry, Macarthy aboo!

“Ah, woe and wail! are there no sons of that three thousand, ready and willing—now?

“Dark-haired daughter of kings! to count over the castles that bore your name would be to count the sands of the wild seashore; to number those who paid you homage would be numbering the blossoms of the wild rush upon the evergreen fields.

“Who wanted, when a Macarthy had bread? Who sorrowed, when a Macarthy could shield? Who suffered that the Macarthy did not avenge? The love of thy race was sweeter than honey. Thy maidens were fair and gentle—fleet and light of foot. Faithful wives and tender mothers—oh, woe and wail!

“They are still fair and gentle, but they are not fleet-footed to shun the famine and the fire; the starving child looks into the weeping eyes of the starving mother!

“The dark-haired daughter of kings had lived many days!

“She saw that the Saxon divided to destroy.

“He knew that his step was stealthy; that he poisoned the free springs; that he pinioned the eagle in his hen-coops, and fettered the red-deer in his sheep-folds. That his heart turned away from the Celt; while his fingers grew to his sword. That he looked upon the mountains and the valleys and said, ‘They are mine!’ While his lips spoke peace, his breath kindled the fire in valley and highland. He held out his hand to the Madam; but she cursed the red palm; she scorned it, as became a Macarthy.

“Even in her last hour, a vision arose before the lady—a vision of the future; bright, with a green and purple glory. And a voice said, ‘Live!’ And the dark-haired daughter of kings said, ‘Why?’ And the voice said, ‘Behold!’ And the vision did not come from afar, nor from over the sea, but from our own land it arose—a vision of peace, of golden harvests, and lowing cows, of dancing and feasting; the harp, and the pipe, and the grass-green flag—the council of kings, and the music of a happy multitude.

“Ah, woe and wail! ‘Such visions pass away,’ said Katherine Macarthy; ‘I close my eyes, and they come crowding round me, as I saw them in my young spring time: I open them, and they are gone—gone—gone!’”

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TWO FUNERALS.

A FEW words more, and the history of the events which preceded Edward Spencer’s arrival in Ireland will have closed.

Within the house of the Spencers, matters were conducted with the solemnity, the order, and the propriety befitting the obsequies of a Protestant lady; yet there was a regard to “form,” varying in many respects from that which would have attended a death-bed in England. Much as Mrs. Spencer had been disliked, all who desired to be considered well-wishers of the family called to have a “last look at the mistress,” and the kitchen and servants’ hall were amply furnished with refreshments for the humbler classes. The coffin was never left without watchers, day or night; and poor Ellen found it difficult to steal in unperceived to renew the flowers, which, it is said, fade all the quicker from coming in contact with death. Invitations were not sent to any to attend the funeral, for absence would have been considered a mark of exceeding disrespect. An abundant supply was, therefore, spread on the night previous to the last ceremony, in the reception rooms, because of the certainty that all Protestants within twenty miles—all the gentry and all the tenants—would assemble to pay their last tribute of respect to the dead.

It was considered a singular coincidence that the mistress of Spencer Court and “the Madam” should have died within so short a time of each other; and no two “gatherings” could be more different, though of the same people, than of those who met to offer civilities to Spencer Court, and the wild disorganised mountain crowd which assembled in the court yard and around the “ruined castle,” in every variety of misery which an Irish crowd can so terribly illustrate. At the latter, there were many well-mounted and respectably-dressed farmers; their wives or daughters on a pillion behind them, the men gray-coated, carrying heavy riding-whips, the women shrouded in blue cloaks, and gay-

coloured silk handkerchiefs tied over their caps instead of bonnets ; others mounted on shaggy mountain horses, whose only halter was a hay-band ; others, and by far the greater number, on foot, crowding to get some portion of the homely food which was distributed as long as it lasted, or the still more sought for "bit" of tobacco, or glass of whiskey ; indeed, the latter was by far the most popular refreshment as well as the most plentiful, for many a distiller of mountain dew had paid his tribute of honour to the memory of "the great Madam," by sending a keg, a gallon, or a few bottles of spirits to her wake. It was well known to the motley and excited crowd, that the funeral of "the Madam" and the mistress of Spencer Court were to take place on the same day, and about the same hour.

There is a superstition rife amongst the people, that if two funerals enter consecrated ground nearly at the same moment, whichever coffin is interred last, its inmate will be doomed to attend upon the inmate of the first, in purgatory ; five and twenty years have swept away many of the old beliefs, but this still remains, and, at the time referred to, very dreadful contentions were not unfrequent, in consequence, amongst the followers of the silent dead. The Macarthys had mustered in large numbers to pay their last tribute of respect to one whose trials and sorrows had greatly endeared her to the people ; and the old subject of Annie Cumming and young Macarthy's love, and its destruction by Mrs. Spencer, was revived and talked over with much bitterness. The son of this ill-fated affection was the chief mourner at his grandmother's funeral ; he was, as we have shown, a wild, high-spirited, unlettered boy, treading all too rapidly in the steps of his father's latter days. The Macarthy funeral had farther to go than that of Mrs. Spencer ; but it was earlier on the road, followed by a long straggling multitude of people of Cork and Kerry, easily distinguished from each other by their very different physiognomies—the long, lean, dark faces of the Kerry men, contrasting with the round, nut-like head and thick stubbed features of the natives of Cork county ; but all intent upon doing honour to one of the "ould ancient families."

Mrs. Spencer's funeral was somewhat less than a quarter of a mile from the place of interment when the mass of persons who followed the widow's remains came in sight—heaving and tossing down the mountain, like the billows of a cataract after a night's storm. It is usual in Ireland for the poor to give place to the rich, in a manner which happily in England is but a tale of the feudal system ; an Irish peasant too generally lacked the practice of standing erect in the presence of the wealthy who lorded it over him—exacting a serf's homage, without giving a baron's protection ; but there were strong and turbulent, careless and dissatisfied persons in the mountain crowd, heated by much talk of bygone days, inflamed by the ardent liquid (now happily one of the legends of the past), and urged to a service of danger by a superstitious belief, that it was a duty to save the immortal part

of one of an honoured race from thraldom to one whom they had both feared and hated,—for Irish dislike is hatred!

There were still wilder men—strangers—beyond the influence of Spencer Court, who only wished to show their attachment to a faction by honouring the remains of one who had a double claim, herself a Macarthy, and wedded to a Macarthy, whose grandson was already remarkable for vigour and beauty, and despite the blot which Mrs. Spencer had sought to fix upon him, the offspring of her own sister; looking, moreover, able, and willing to dare and do, as his unhappy father had done before him.

Without further consideration, the resolve became general that the Macarthy funeral should deposit its silent freight in holy ground before the arrival of the other. The funeral from Spencer Court was preceded by a heavy hearse, moving along slowly and silently; while the coffin of the Macarthy, the shell containing literally the “remains” of a woman of delicate frame, was borne on six stout men’s shoulders; the bearers paused for brief converse with the determined spirits of the party, and then rushed into what had at one time been the principal road, but was now a deserted highway, leading in a direct line to the churchyard, while the stately hearse continued to move along the new line of road. As soon as the intention of the Macarthys was observed, the gentry and those who had quitted Spencer Court became indignant at what they considered an insult offered to one of rank, and determined to prevent it; it was in vain that Dean Graves reminded them of the superstition which occasioned the increased speed and agitation of the mountaineers and glens-men—a superstition which had no influence over the minds of persons more enlightened; it was in vain that several, more constitutionally cool, or more reasonable than others, urged how utterly undignified it would be to enter into a race with the “Whiteboys and Catarans” who composed the majority of the rushing crowd, forcing their way with ill-suppressed shouts of triumph; all was vain.

Mr. Richards, ever anxious to be a prominent object, was at that time remarkably thin and erect; he bestrode a gray gaunt horse of immense power, and was loud in his anathemas against those who would dare to insult the remains of his sainted lady, yet imploring them not to enter into collision with the children of perdition. A few were for continuing their quiet order of going; but the majority would not “give in,” and the horses of the hearse being urged into a most indecent gallop, the Spencer Court crowd rushed on with them,—some catching the exasperation of the moment, while others ran because others hurried forward. The “short cut” which the attendants on the Macarthy funeral had made, and their being unencumbered by stately trappings of woe, gave them the advantage in rapidity of movement, and notwithstanding that the funeral from Spencer Court had at one time been so much in advance of that from the mountain, the foremost of both parties rushed through the gate and over the walls into consecrated ground, almost at the same moment; but

numerous as were the attendants at Mrs. Spencer's funeral, not one-half of them felt disposed to take part against their friends, and the friends of "an ould ancient family,"—such either slunk away from the gentry or kept behind the hearse, the other party occupying the holy ground, flourishing their shillalas, yelling, shouting, standing on the tombstones, clinging to the ivy that enwreathed the walls of the old church, and forming a fortress of determined and half-intoxicated men around those who were digging the grave amid the bones and broken coffins of an ancient race.

Many of the gentlemen rode in among the people, beating them down with their heavy riding-whips, and trampling them beneath their horses' feet; this was hardly resisted at first, though some of the peasants were engaged hand to hand at the time, particularly round the vault where the remains of Mrs. Spencer were to be deposited, and where a party was endeavouring to make a passage for the coffin; but it was evident that there were many among the strangers who would not endure the blows—which the rich in those days were sufficiently apt to inflict upon the poor; they clutched their cl'alpines and looked "touch me if you dare," at the few who, well-mounted, struck they hardly cared when or where. If the widower had not been confined at Spencer Court by severe illness, his being so much beloved, and the sympathy always felt towards the sorrow that is before them, would have restrained the people; but the presence of Richards, hated and despised as he was, stirred them still more to wrath; and even if superstition had not urged them to secure the services of a proud presbyterian soul for her who had departed in the more ancient faith of her house, they would have rejoiced at an opportunity of mortifying one who certainly deserved neither consideration nor forbearance at their hands. In the midst of the tumult Dean Graves rode up to where Father Duffy sat, upon his stout cob, waiting the result of the conflict; he raised his hat with the courtesy of a gentleman, and the priest returned it; "If you do not interfere, Father Duffy, there will be blood shed," said the dean.

"You can make your party wait, if you please," was the abrupt and uncourteous reply, "the Macarthys buried their dead in that church-yard before the sound of a Spencer's name was heard in the country."

"I cannot curb those men, Father Duffy, I have not the influence that you have, and you know it; I tell you, blood will be shed unless you interfere. How dreadful it is that contention should enter into sacred ground—that we cannot bury our dead in peace."

"Then why did you suffer that base blood-hound," replied the priest, while he shook his whip at Richards, whose horse seemed inspired with the same evil spirit as its rider, and plunged violently among the people, "why did you suffer him to disgrace the funeral by attending it? The air is thick with curses on him.

There—you may well say there will be blood shed, he has drawn a pistol!—Back boys—back—or you'll be murdered outright,” exclaimed the priest, riding forward, and really alarmed when it was too late. “Back!” he exclaimed; and then, in their native language, repeated his exhortation to them to disperse.

But Richards felt himself in danger—fierce eyes glared on him. He had been twice struck, and women as well as men were ready to hurl stones, plucked from newly-covered graves, at his head. He was an admirable horseman, sitting firm as a centaur, although his horse plunged like a demon; the crowd pressed around him, yelling and hooting, and threatening; until at last he drew a pistol from his breast, and declared he would fire if they did not give way.

It would be impossible to describe the scene; those who had brought the coffin out of the hearse were knocked down and trampled on; while dozens fought over the silent dead. Dean Graves, at the hazard of his own life, made his way among the people, to preserve the body from being crushed by the multitude. At this moment, a stone hurled from a distance struck Richards on the chest. The violence of the blow caused him to reel in his saddle, and those who had fallen back at sight of the pistol, now pressed on with a shout of triumph. It was short lived, however, for Richards fired. Instantly, there was a lull—a pause; every voice was hushed—every sound ceased; the mighty rolling of the mass was stilled—the very echo of the shot was heard, repeated in the mountains; and then came the buzz and murmur—the deadened whisper that young Macarthy had been slain.

It was well for Richards that he trusted to the bottom and mettle of his horse; dashing through the crowd, he fled; leaving his friends to fight it out as they best could. There was an instant diversion in the people's object; some, intent on summary vengeance, pursued the fugitive; others remained firm to their first resolve. Again, the mighty noise of the multitude swelled, until it was echoed by the vaults and ruins of the holy pile. The Keen arose as if to knell another death; but the youth, whose fate excited all their sympathy and enthusiasm, sprang upon a head-stone, while the blood flowed from his arm, and entreated to be heard; although his voice was agitated and feeble, his appeal was successful. In a very few words, he thanked them for the love they bore a fallen house, said that he had seen his grandmother's coffin lowered into its grave, so that for which they contended was accomplished; that his hand was only grazed, and that though he should not forget who had given the wound, he hoped the friends of the Macarthy would disperse.

The Spencer Court party had had enough of this most disgraceful contention; and though they still stood upon their right, which they conceived to have been grievously outraged, they were thoroughly disgusted by the violence and cowardice displayed by Richards. No further attempt was made to interrupt the interment of Mrs. Spencer's remains; the Roman Catholics

quitting, as is usual, the churchyard, leaving the few Protestants to listen to the funeral service, and the simple and eloquent prayer pronounced by the clergyman: "that a better feeling might speedily be manifested in the land, and a spirit of divine charity and mutual love take the place of bitter hatred and fierce superstition." He went still further; he prayed that forbearance and patience might especially find place in the hearts of the little band now gathered round the last abode of their departed sister; that they might remember those who were crowding over the mountains, flushed with triumph, and shouting forth their hatred of the 'new race,' were ignorant and uninstructed—the victims of long-standing prejudices; and rather ask, what cause they had given for the revival of such feelings, than employ their thoughts in devising means of vengeance and further injury.

While this prayer was uttered, the clergyman's eyes were raised to heaven; the events of the morning had shaken the good man's strength, and his voice faltered from its own earnestness. He did not see the indignant glances that flashed from eye to eye in his small congregation; nor perceive that more than one or two stood back, not wishing that oil should be poured upon the troubled waters.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE MIDDLEMAN.

THE funerals were long talked of, and the animosities they revived still longer felt, in the immediate neighbourhood of the scene. In isolated parts of a country, impressions linger like snow on the mountain-tops—impressions that would have been obliterated by the business or pleasures of active life. Abel Richards, who acted so conspicuous a part in the transaction we have recorded, had previously been making his way in the world after the fashion of the lowest reptiles; wriggling as a worm; burrowing as a mole; wise, in his own fashion, as a serpent; poisonous as an adder—the slime of evil deeds tracking his course. As a toad broods and fattens in its rocky bed, so did this man increase and prosper—the base ideal of a class which at one time ate into the very vitals of Irish prosperity—the exacting, the selfish, the merciless—the debasing and debased—middleman.

"But how," will the English reader ask, "how was this?—how could it be?"

How it was we can hardly explain, though we have heard and seen as much of the "MIDDLEMAN" as most persons; seen the character in all its various grades—from the broad, vulgar, pompous presumer who dared to talk of "his family," who had his thousand acres of the absentee landlord-in-chief, to whom he was a punctual paymaster, or advanceer of monies, wrung from the thews and sinews of hard-handed men, the blood and bones of a

willing people—from him down to the middleman scarcely a remove in education or position from the poor vassals over whom he was a despot. It would be difficult to believe that any people but the Irish could so long have submitted to the middleman as “a system ;” and alas ! when they did attempt to rise against it, from its terrible and intricate ramifications, it involved them in entanglements of false-reasonings, false judgings, and crimes, which have left an awful curse upon the country.

Take Abel Richards as a specimen of the class—and, believe us, there have been many worse ; a keen, cunning man—a steward’s son, inheriting his father’s earnings and his mother’s vices—crawling about “the big house” with a bland smile, a quick ear, a ready invention—a few pounds ever in his purse—to lend, when profit could be made—to buy, at every seizure for rent, either cow or pig, potato or kish, by which he could make a guinea, a shilling, or a penny—a bow and an obliging lie always at the service of his rich neighbour—a blow and a bite for his poor one. Not but that Abel shirked “the ruffian” whenever he could, especially in his latter days ; for he was not given to open strife—it did not answer his purpose. He knew that land—“the bit of land”—is the peasant’s existence ; he has, in nine cases out of ten, no regular employment to look to ; he must have “the bit of land,” no matter what he promises to pay for it ; he must have it, or beg and starve ; if ejected, he dare not seek for ground elsewhere, for if he eject another holder, his own doom is sealed. Richards knew this—he had grown up in the knowledge, and to the calculations which such knowledge brings ; at first he got twenty or thirty acres of land into his possession, which he let, re-let, divided, subdivided, until it was said he made the district “a place of poverty and potato-gardens.” Then he was only an under “middleman ;”—the middleman of a middleman, who perhaps (the case was by no means rare) was a middleman under yet another middleman. The wretched beings who called him “Master Abel” (that was his *first* public step), were subject to have their pig, and their bed if they had one, “canted” by landlords—one, two, three, or more. But Abel never “got on swimmingly” until he became a convert—turned his back upon his old faith, and adopted a new, under the fostering patronage of Mrs. Spencer. This, for a time, gave him a push—a lift with the gentry. All the ill will his avarice and cruelty had earned, it was very convenient to attribute to “his changed faith.” He had been so hated previously, that we may doubt if his “turning coat” increased the ill-will ; but he made people believe it did, and managed to obtain a considerable augmentation of land from an absentee landholder, who had some zeal—and much need of the money, which Mister Richards did not fail to procure.

In due course he made some speeches at meetings in Dublin, which “told” with those who have a sufficient quantity of charity to “know” that all who believe as they believe must be saved, while those who believe otherwise, will be—the contrary. While

Dean Graves, and other of his acquaintances received his confessions, and ejaculations, and tales of persecutions, with mistrust—in Dublin, he dined with titled ladies, learned to eat with a silver fork, obtained various presents of bitterly-worded tracts from those who had the reputation of sanctity among their own “set;” while more timid votaries bestowed on him blue and pink book-markers embroidered with words, which, strange to say, were at decided variance with their practice—thus a lady who would not suffer a “popish” domestic to enter her service, selected the motto, “Charity suffereth long and is kind;” and another, the simple word “Peace,” worked in *orange* silk, as a token of her hatred of the *green*. At all the little “tea-parties” got up by this mistaken body, Abel Richards was introduced with much ceremony as, “that suffering saint from the south.”

He returned to the neighbourhood of Spencer Court with added interest in the eyes of its mistress; for there are persons in the world, who, seeing others “get on,” take it for granted they deserve to prosper. Abel’s system, under his improved fortunes, was that of the higher grade of middleman—the agent between the necessities of one class, and the necessities and vices of another. Sometimes he let two or three acres, or even one—never of course on lease; the tenant had to build his own dwelling; this in itself stamps the place in the poor cottier’s affection—he has kneaded the clay with his hands and his spade; he has raised the stones; he has cut the sods; he has carried the wattles; and if his roof be straw, he and his wife and children have borne it—perhaps as a free gift from “a strong farmer”—on their shoulders, and wrought it into a shelter beneath which he is to spend, he hopes, his life. Few think of this natural love which all men have to the work of their own hands, when they read of an ejectionment, and the consequences which follow; but Abel Richards knew it, and understood it—and knew its value, when it was to be turned to account. There are some who joy to see the harrow passing over the fresh-tilled field; to whom the husbandman’s whistle is sweeter than that of the wild bird; who pause in the fresh pure air to bless God that He permits them to hear the music of hopeful hearts; and to see the seed cast into the earth—a type of immortality. But Abel Richards would bite his lips with bitterness at the labourer’s whistle, and inveigle the tenant who could pay and wished to pay, into his debt, that so he might have power to raise his rent or cast him forth.

An act of this kind caused the return of Mr. Spencer, who, after his wife’s death, had absented himself from Spencer Court, making Miss Ellen’s education a pretext for the change he so much needed or desired, leaving many he had protected, to the mercy of evildoers—he was, however, active when roused, and this roused him for a time. A man who resided many years on the land of which Abel Richards got possession, and had hitherto paid his rent punctually, was induced by a manœuvre of the middleman to get into arrear. Watching his opportunity, while the man was in

Cork, the agent levied a distress upon his goods, and seized for the rent. His wife resisted, and was committed for assault; it is true she was liberated in a few days, but she caught the fever in gaol, and communicated it to her husband, and two out of five of their children died of the pestilence. Next "gale" day the poor man was totally unable to meet his rent.

At this time, the potatoes in the pit outside the poor man's house were distrained on, and the bailiffs were watching to seize him for the costs of a lawsuit which Richards had drawn him into in the extremity of his distress; and knowing that Mr. Spencer had influence over Richards, who still acted as his agent, he wrote to him the particulars of his case, by the hand of Lawrence Macarthy. Time, however, passed on, and no answer came; for days and nights the poor man lay out amid the rocks of Glenflesk, and the fastnesses of the higher mountains.

Abel feared Mr. Spencer's return before his victim's ruin was thoroughly accomplished, and with the sagacity of a demon he laid a trap for the man. He caused a report to be circulated through the outlawed district, where he believed he was concealed, that his wife was dead; the man rushed home, was tracked by the bailiffs to his own house, but had time to bar the door—they dared not break in! But the middleman was not to be baffled: he said to the bailiffs, "Starve them out; suffer neither bit nor sup to enter the house; he will not see his children die."

For three days they endured famine; on the first, they had a few cold potatoes; on the second, nothing; on the third, the children cried for food, and the mother looked in her husband's face. As the evening advanced, the door opened; the man, ghastly and desperate, stood armed with a pitchfork at the entrance; he said he would have food for his children, and the life of whoever touched him. The bailiffs (there were three), it might be they feared, it might be they pitied him, but they suffered him and his wife to drag some potatoes from the store. And when Abel heard it, he knew that now he could issue a criminal warrant against the man for stealing his own potatoes! He procured it; but its execution was prevented by Mr. Spencer's arrival. If ever Ellen Macdonnel was greeted as an angel, it was then; if ever she was cursed by a demon, it was then. It was well known that she had accelerated Mr. Spencer's return; it was believed that Lawrence Macarthy communicated with her on the subject. But the poor man was saved from ruin, while Abel blandly resigned all charge of Mr. Spencer's rents, declaring that however unworthy he believed the man to be, he was but too happy to oblige his old "patron," by proving that he bore him no ill-will for his obstinacy. But the man could not—and did not—forget his dead children!

After this occurrence it amazed many that Abel remained in the country; but, strange as it may seem, he was countenanced by some who believed the people in array against him "for his new faith;" he was still the "suffering saint of the South," "labouring

in an unproductive vineyard," sowing seed on stony-ground, and "among thorns."

It may seem marvellous to those who have happily never mingled with the *ultras* of either party, much less of both parties, in Ireland, how such a man could not only live, but proceed in a course of worldly prosperity, feared by some, useful to many; useful beyond all telling to those who required the utmost penny for their land—yet despised—hated—cursed!—while thieving, thriving!

In the evil days of which we write, such evil men were considered necessary to the thriftless absentee; necessary to the careless fox-hunting, claret-drinking squire, willing to pay a middleman for bearing the curses that ought to have fallen on himself.

And so Abel Richards went on—grasping together large sums at last; yet he would still enter the widow's cabin, and if she could not pay him the interest of the two or three pounds lent to her husband before his death, he would pocket the eggs laid on the dresser for market day, or take the hanks of yarn off the peg, or the basket of chickens from the eldest girl—not as a "set off" against principal or interest—oh, no! that would be mercy and justice! and Abel Richards knew neither; but as a present, a boon for his *forbearance*! and then as he mounted his horse he would fling them a tract and a "blessing." He never distressed an utterly poor man, where he could gain nothing by it. No! eases of that kind he contrived should be witnesses to his patience and charity; but like a fiend, he would watch and wait, and so despoil the tenant of every comfort—of his new hat, or his wife's shawl, or his little pig, or his hive of bees—whenever any such came: nothing was beyond or beneath, too high or too low for his grasp.

Mr. Spencer became after this, his last absence from Spencer Court, his own agent and his own steward; and though he lacked perseverance and energy, he was kind and conciliating—*just*, moreover, and justice is the last thing a poor Irishman expects. Ellen, whose mind was older than her years, was his almoner, and if it had not been for the necessary, though frequently injudicious, superintendence of Mrs. Myler, would have been as happy as any ungoverned young lady could have wished to be.

The kindness of Dean Graves, and the affection of his daughters preserved Ellen from being utterly spoiled. To Mr. Spencer, Ellen Macdonnel had grown from a plaything into a companion, riding, singing, reading, and reciting with him; and to him, as was most needed, she was in every respect a fond, a most affectionate, if not altogether a very obedient child.

During the five years that Mr. Spencer survived his wife, Ellen Macdonnel's clear full brow would have been seldom overcast, but for the love she bore her brother, who was never noticed by her protector. Master Mat had become so completely crazed on the subject of concealed treasure, that he abandoned his teaching for wandering, and his pen for the pickaxe, and seldom approached

the school-house for weeks together ; this was also a grief to her—her wise, her kind, her learned Domine ! To be sure, she had free access to his small store of books, and they were, generally speaking, such as a wild, enthusiastic girl should not have made her companions. Ellen, however, must be known as she really was—a creature of warm affections ; a lover of all things appertaining to her native country, which she believed had suffered beneath long ages of misrule ; earnest and hopeful ; determined, rash, with a temper quick enough to be called “violent” by her foes, and “very warm” by her friends. Her position was still as undefined, as undetermined as ever. Some said one thing, some another. The neighbours had long discovered, that her bright chestnut hair was the colour that Mrs. Spencer’s might have been in her youth ; that her eyes—deep, violet eyes—resembled those of poor Annie Cumming ; that her large, full brow, was like—nobody’s ; but her nose and chin the “very moral” of one they did not care to name. Her figure was small, considering her years, more active than graceful ; and her movements, at times, more rapid and decisive, than was in strict accordance with good breeding. But Ellen’s greatest charm was the varying and eloquent expression of her mobile features ; clear or shadowed, tearful or smiling, as circumstances touched her heart or excited her imagination. In her character, she was brightly and eminently truthful ; not feeling her dependence, as an English girl would have done, because dependants swarmed around her, without considering it degradation, or being insulted in a poor country because of their poverty. And yet, “Nelly” was proud as a princess ; at times, exalted by the highest spirits, while at others, she sank into tears, and a despondence akin to despair. Her natural habits and disposition might have been moulded into mental beauty of the rarest kind, for she was generous as upright, and brave as true ; while her intense love of her country exalted her character—as patriotism, apart from all worldly and personal considerations, must ever do.

Mr. Spencer continued to live undisturbed at Spencer Court—indifferent to rumours that occasionally reached him, of evil doings among the peasantry, far off or near at hand.

Still, the Whiteboy outbreaks were becoming more frequent, and assuming more organised and determined forms. Several gentlemen quitted the neighbourhood ; but Mr. Spencer’s want of energy and activity, increasing with his prolonged existence, was his principal safeguard ; he became also more kindly and good-humoured, —attributable, and perhaps justly, to Ellen’s influence ; and shocked some of the high-pressure people, by a declaration that he was convinced the lower class were not evil movers ; that he wondered how they had borne what they had borne for so many years ; that their endurance was exemplary, and that disturbance existed only amongst those who were not poverty-stricken. He muttered, also, something which sounded very like “rights of the people ;” and hinted his opinion, that

the representative of a certain ancient family had actually committed a breach of the peace by knocking down his own coachman. These were novel doctrines in those days. He had learned, moreover, what things a landlord might do, and what things it would be much better for him to avoid. Some said his conduct proceeded from love of the people, others, that he feared for himself; and many wondered that Mr. Graves permitted his daughters to companion so much with such a girl as Ellen Macdonnel, whom nobody knew, and who was little more or less than a young rebel.

But all Mr. Spencer's plans were suddenly overturned—crushed—extinguished, by a stroke of apoplexy, which terminated fatally in a few hours. A kindly man he was, without any of the higher or holier objects of our nature,—living an aimless life; yet his funeral was “mighty grand.” His heir and nephew being abroad, did not hear of his death for a considerable time after the last “palled pageant” had faded; and did not visit Ireland, as we know, until several months after the “melancholy event.”

Some said, it was a great blot on the memory of the “Master of Spencer Court,” that he had forgotten to provide for a child of his adoption, who had loved, and tended, and cherished him as a parent. His wife had bequeathed her to his care, and as he never spoke of his nephew Edward Spencer, and invariably treated “dear Nelly” as a daughter, and during the last months of his life, always mentioned her as “his niece,” many expected that the young, favoured, petted creature, would have been provided for; but at the last “poor Nelly” was forgotten—left upon the world without a shilling!

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## CHAPTER IX.

### “THE SICKNESS.”

ABEL RICHARDS had long been a stranger at Spencer Court. Mrs. Myler, though ambitious of being considered “a saint” was of late somewhat averse to be reckoned one of *his* saints; and though she could perceive no harm in much that her late master and Miss Ellen condemned, she appeared to deem herself justified in hating one she had formerly upheld as a martyr. She manifested, therefore, some surprise when, a few days after Mr. Spencer's funeral, Mr. Richards, unannounced, entered her little parlour. Having offered a few words of condolence, he suddenly inquired for Miss Ellen.

“And what will come of the fine young lady now that her friend is gone? What will become of her now? she's too fine for her brother—and for service.”

“Service!” repeated Mrs. Myler, looking spitefully over her spectacles at the place where Mr. Richards stood—for he had risen

too high in the world to *sit* in a housekeeper's room. "Service!" she screamed forth again, after a pause, and her thin angular figure dilated and trembled with bitter indignation, while her sharp purple nose assumed something of a warm crimson tone from the heat of her displeasure. "Service, Mr. Richards!—and what right, may I make bould to ask, have you, or the likes of you, to mention service to Miss Ellen Macdonnel—or any thing else disparaging to her."

"Why, you say the master died without a will."

"Good, Sir!" answered Mistress Myler, drawing back her head with a jerk, while she touched the thumb of her left hand with the forefinger of her right, preparing to count his questions and her own replies.

"And what's to keep her?"

"I'd be sorry to make an old fellow-sarvint (as for all the ring on yer finger and a silver-gilt watch in yer fob, I must still count you, Mister Richards), I'd be sorry to make a fellow-sarvint and a fellow-sinner an ill answer—but what's that to you?" and she looked in a steady and determined manner into his face.

"Oh, it's nothing to me, certainly, but from old regard to the family."

"Ah, bathershin, Abel Richards! Regard! no wonder my head is gray, thinking of the wickedness of the world! Regard for the family, inagh! You forget all I know, and all I could tell, only I'd scorn it."

"Really, my good Mistress Myler, your present humour is most unaccountable, and, I must say, unfitted for the time when you ought to bear a chastened and sobered spirit. I inquired after the young woman's welfare."

"Who do you call young woman?" interrupted Mistress Myler. "I mind the time when you thought she pleased the poor mistress's fancy, that you'd go on your knees from this to Cork, to fetch her a rocking-horse—young woman, indeed!"

"I am sure, Margaret, I have heard you abuse her up and down, right and left, so that as the saying is, a black crow wouldn't look the road she went; and now you fly out like a turkey-cock at a civil question. But maybe the fatigue has taken effect upon you, my poor woman, and you're not quite yourself. I ought not to be angry, but remember your fallen state."

"I scorn yer insinuations, Sir!" retorted the angry house-keeper. "My lips never touched glass this blessed day, and my head's as clear as my heart's pure!"

"Misguided sinner!" interrupted Richards, extending his arm and throwing up his eyes.

"Look here," she exclaimed. "I own I have abused Miss Ellen, and good right I had—a young witch, driving the world through heaven's windows—but what's that to any one? She was part of the house, and I had as good a right to fau't her, as I had the master or the mistress; but no one else shall *dare* to do it, when I'm to the fore; and as to what she has or what she

hasn't, it's no affair of any one's. She'll have enough that's honestly come by, not wrung out of the starvation of the poor, or moulded with the dying curses of hungry houseless sinners!"

"The benighted woman is gone mad," muttered Abel Richards, while his hands trembled so with anger that he could hardly button his coat.

"No!" answered Mistress Myler, "she is not—one thing or another has brought her to her senses;" then she added with prophetic gravity, drawing herself up, "the country at this blessed moment is just like a kettle on the bille—a kettle that will bille away its strength into the fire, but in so doing *put out the fire that set it biling*; mind that, Abel Richards. One that stirs up the poor and ignorant, or those that are neither the one nor the other, into mischief, or puts stumbling-blocks in the night time into a clear path:—the Lord forgive them their sins! and those who remove their neighbour's landmark—sure, *you'll* say, 'Amen' when I say the Lord forgive *them* their sins? Well, good evening to you, my fine gentleman! it's getting late, and I don't blame you not to stay out after nightfall; Lawrence Macarthy's a fine young man now, with the mark of your shot on the third—the lucky—finger of his left hand; and the faction has a strong back and a long memory, and them ejectments are fresh in the people's heads. Well, God be praised! *we* have no occasion to draw a *boult* or hinder the early morning air coming in—the breath of God's blessing it is—by shutting the windows over night. The poor gentleman that's now in his grave—'Mrs. Myler,' says he, 'never heed the bolts; they never rob; if they've a mind to murder, bolts won't keep them out.' That was a true word; the life isn't worth having that the body must keep watch over to the destruction of its own peace. Oh, a good night, Sir; if the bell wasn't broke, I'd ring for one to let you out; though the ways of the house aint unknown to you. I dare say the young gentleman will come over to look after things himself one of these days."

Richards waited no longer, but with an inward curse, which he cloaked beneath a blessing, stumbled his way down the stairs as he best could; starting only once, as the wind from one of Mistress Myler's favourite *open* windows agitated the cape of the riding-cloak which Mr. Spencer would need no more.

Of all people in the world the Irish are least changed by the poverty of their superiors; there is much of instinctive chivalry in the national character; a warm sympathy with the poor and unfortunate—ever bestowing that, if they have nothing else to give.

Ellen had never been treated with so much respect and affection by the servants at Spencer Court, as when she was believed to be friendless and penniless; the old butler laid the cloth and the best plate for her; the groom, who had many a time grumbled at her hard riding, assured her the horses wanted exercise; the

gardener cut for her the few choice flowers that remained ; and she provoked the wrath of Mrs. Myler, by steadily refusing the presents of eggs and poultry which her humble neighbours brought for her as free gifts. But the greatest change was in the old housekeeper's demeanour towards her, "Don't be down-hearted, dear," she would say, "and let the past go. I tell you, when the master comes over, he'll find what I say is true ; every thing, he said in his letter, is to remain as it is ; so make yourself asy dear."

Yet nothing could remove the weight from poor Ellen's heart. Whatever people might say, she found herself powerless, where for the last five years she had been powerful—craving for independence, yet shrinking from obtaining it by any species of servitude, which in Ireland is always considered dependence. She knew a great deal, but nothing perfectly ; natural talents she possessed to admiration ; a voice of exceeding beauty and an ear of undeviating truth and purity, she had cultivated only as a means of amusement ; Dean Graves and his daughters were away ; so she had no counsellors. A deep and almost absorbing anxiety for her brother, as dear as he was dangerous, was mingled with her every thought : plans or projects she had none. It was true the heir of Spencer Court had desired that all things might go on as usual until he was able to visit Ireland, but Ellen loathed the idea of an Englishman having power there, and resolved, go where she would, to leave the place before his arrival. These various and contending feelings wrought upon her to such a degree, that a violent illness was the consequence ; so complicated and severe it was, that the housekeeper thought there would be another funeral ; but this violent attack cemented more strongly the freshly developed love she bore the young and lonely girl ; it was a drawing out of her nature, her Irish nature, that developed the sweetness concealed by the rough-coated nut. Ellen lay down on her bed of sickness a wild, rebellious-hearted girl, rebellious against God's will ; but the woe and wearing of weeks, continuing into months, sobered and softened her ; and when she began to recover her strength, it was to hear that not only starvation, but a fierce and pestilent fever was raging all around them. The winter had been bitter and severe, the spring wet and dreary, the summer cold ; the ever recurring trouble was rife—for the old potatoes were exhausted, the new ones not come in ; discontent and disaffection prevailed, while scores were lying and dying of the pestilence. This state of things in a comparatively milder degree, was neither new nor uncommon ; but previously, she had had the means of alleviating the misery which no individual fortune could remove. Now, she could do little but weep. Whatever feeling Mrs. Myler had (her position rendering her griping, while her nature inclined to kindness), seemed absorbed by Ellen ; nor was it until two of the domestics of Spencer Court were seized and sacrificed by the "sickness," that the housekeeper awoke to its danger. "It was shocking," she said, "to have it

coming like a wild baste into gentlemen's houses ; all the fault of the quality not being there to keep it out."

When Ellen gained a little bodily strength, it would have needed more powerful authority than Mrs. Myler's to keep her from her old haunts ; first she crept, tree by tree, along the lonely avenue, until she reached the gate-house ; here a sheet steeped in lime and hung across the door, would have been a sufficient intimation not to enter, to any one who knew what fear of contagion was ; but Ellen put it aside, and saw the living child on the breast of the dead mother ; while the father was sitting, shivering and ghastly, beside "the hob" where the fire used to burn so brightly, his fingers expanded over the smouldering embers of the "powdery" turf, that here and there emitted a glaring spark, as the breeze from the door stirred the soft ashes. He looked at, but did not know her, though he knew that death was his companion then—for groans of mental anguish, sterner and deeper than ever arose from mere pain, shook his frame even more strongly than the disease beneath which he was sinking. The child dropt its mother's breast, and looking up to Ellen, stretched out its arms towards her.

"I'll take it, Miss ; the sickness is over me, so I can't have it," said the eldest girl, whom she had not previously perceived, and the pale creature staggered to the bed ; "Mother's quite dead now—quite dead : father, mother's gone—clean—clean gone from us. Oh, father ! jewel ! cry—cry, and it will ease yer heart. He's never shed a tear, Miss, since my brothers war buried." She placed the child across his arms, and wailed out, "Mother's gone—mother's gone."

This recalled the man ; he strained the infant convulsively to his heart, turned his slow, meaningless gaze towards the bed, and uttered a scream, full of such ringing horror and despair, that Ellen covered her ears with her hands, and rushed out of the lodge. For some minutes she leaned against a pillar of the avenue gate. It is astonishing how rapidly things fall to decay in Ireland ; seldom is a nail replaced, until the hinge drops off, or a stone put back, until the wall breaks down ; Ellen was, therefore, hardly surprised when the hasp of the gate came off in her hand, and the remaining hinge hung on, in sulky indifference, by a single screw. The dog, half cur, half hound, who used to bark with such earnest vehemence if that gate was touched by any but his master and mistress, came out—the shadow of his former self ; his long tail, uncurled and draggling, his bristles sticking out, and his eyes glazed. The animal stalked up to, and smelt at her feet and dress ; then, raising up its gaunt head, uttered a sharp bark followed by a yell, so unlike his usual inquiring and insulting tones, that Ellen laid her hand on the head of her own stately dog, to prevent his displeasure from falling on the author of such unearthly sounds. The yell, mingled with the damp, chill air, which the rays of the sun failed to warm, seemed to ring in her ears after the creature had crept away within the sheet. Yet, as

she looked through the bars, upon the green sloping fields—the river brightening and dancing in the valley, while beyond, the effect of the light and clouds threw varied and ever changing tints upon the mountains—her spirit recovered its elasticity: and a gush of thankfulness to God that she was again able to walk forth amid the beauty of her own land, cheered her, with a rapidity which only youth, and Irish youth, can know. She pushed open the gate, and after walking a few yards, entered the little court leading to the school-house.

Weeds had grown up between the flint stones that paved the entrance—small, stubborn, rag-weed, and the sappy, staring dandelion, the pushing, intrusive leaves of the rude nettle, and tufts of rank, spiry grass; the woodbine hung loosely and trailed from the broken trellis; and in the very cup of the waterspout, not too high for her hand to reach, a robin had built its nest. At the noise of raising the latch, four sturdy young birds looked down on her, poking out their heads, and ruffling and twisting in their habitation—as if undetermined whether they should wage war with the intruder, or trust to their stout pinions and fly away. How damp the room felt! not close, however, for the opposite door leading into the little garden must have been open for some weeks; weeds had grown up around it—dark, tall weeds; a large yellow frog had been squatting on the hearth-stone, and with its stony eyes, and bloated sides, slouched heavily away as Ellen entered. Crickets were lying dead among turf ashes. The cupboard, where the boys ought to have kept their slates, but where Master Mat stored away his “eatables” in former days, and which had been full of little, fat, frisking mice, whom he could never bear to destroy, was open and silent. The blackbird—the sweet song bird, that whistled his wandering master up many a morning at daybreak, had died of starvation; his yellow bill hanging over the broken blue tea-cup, that once contained its food. The long tables looked like spectres of fir and deal. The books—thumbed, worn, “Vosters,” and “Goughs,” and “Read-a-made-easys,” with here and there a sly “Freeney’s Adventures,” “Valentine and Orson,” or “The Adventures of Redmond O’Hanlon,” more thumbed, more dirty than any of the others—were damp and mildewed; some piled up, others were scattered on the floor. Ellen walked into the kitchen, where Mr. Spencer had ordered that an old woman should live, to look after the house, and cook “the master’s” simple meals; there, the desolation was greater than elsewhere. She called, “Molly—Molly Gary!” The spiders ran along their huge webs, or crouched in the centre of the filmy architecture, as if astonished and terrified at the vibration of a human voice.

There was no other indication that her summons had been heard; with a heart sickened and fainting, as rapidly as it had been refreshed, Ellen passed into the garden. A boy was grubbing up a potato plot which had been already despoiled of the young growth of potatoes—hardly so big as hazel-nuts. He was

devouring every one he could find ; his rags hung on his skeleton limbs ; he started, and would have run away, when he saw her ; but she called the half-idiot child by his “nick-name,” Hatty ; and then he ran half crying, and crouching to her, like a whipped dog.

“ Hatty, where is old Molly gone ? ”

“ Purgatory,” said the child.

“ What, dead ? ”

“ Ou, ay, long agone ! ”

“ And where’s James, Master Mat’s little foreman ? ”

“ Run away from de feaver ; but dey say it overtuck him on de road to Cork—and he’s dead ; so dey say ; and Hatty’s glad. He hot me once—me ! Hatty O’Driscoll wid de Skibereen blood of de Reddy O’Driscoll in mee veins—and he only Jimmy White. Ah, death cot him !—hurroo ! ”

“ Are—are there any more dead, Hatty ? ”

“ Ou, ay, powers o’ people—yet de food’s none de plentyer ! Ye look as if ye oughtn’t to be alive yerself, Miss. Dead ! Bedad dey’re all dead—dey war starved first—and den de feaver. Timmy and little Anty, and Mary Moore, dey’re dead ; and Molly Bawn, and her sister Essy, and Jim Coyle—no, Jim’s alive—and Bobby Macheaffy—no, de breath’s in him yet. I want his waist-coat, Miss Ellen ; so I watches where he’s lying, and give him a drink o’ wather ; but he can’t last, and den, hurroo ! Hatty ’ll have de waistcoat ! ”

Sickened and disgusted, Ellen gave the boy some halfpence, and told him to go to Mrs. Courtney’s shop, and buy a weight of potatoes, or some bread.

“ Mrs. Courtney’s funeral’s just gone up de hill ; but some one else will gi’ me de bread—good luck to ye ! White bread and sweet milk for Hatty O’Driscoll ; hurroo, white bread and sweet milk for Hatty O’Driscoll ! ” and the creature, half fiend, half fool, bounded away—his rags and long tangled hair shaking with every movement. Ellen looked around her, and could hardly credit the evidence of her senses. Mrs. Myler had withheld from her, with a kindly feeling, everything she could that was of a painful nature ; at last, she had become so accustomed to the disease and its results, that she ceased to think of its horrors, as horrors ; and Ellen imagined that the starvation and fever of the miserably memorable year of 1821-2, were not worse than the starvations and fevers which, more or less, had visited the country on former occasions. A cold shivering crept through her frame as she observed the cabins, one by one, that were scattered through the glen, and saw how few signs of life were moving about them ; the tell-tale smoke did not arise from more than two or three. About a dozen people were assembled round a door, waiting to attend one of their friends to his last home ; poor spectral-looking creatures escaped for a little from the starvation which, if it continued much longer, must overtake themselves. At the door of another cabin a woman was crouched, clapping her hands and keening violently, for Ellen heard the wail loading the air with

sorrow. In several places, on the "sheltered side of the ditch," the crossing of poles, and outspreading of a coat or cloak, a patched quilt, or a blanket, showed that the wanderer, who had no home, had laid down there to recover, or to die, as it pleased God; those who feared to admit him into their own homes having done what they could to protect him from the weather.

Within sight, was the dwelling—half farm-house, half something better—of Abel Richards, surrounded by barns of various heights and proportions, built as they were required; stacks of grain, piles of turf, "duty turf;" and in the fields beyond, were potato pits, ridged out—all the elements of life, preserved untouched amid a starving people, who said that Abel had gone over to England for a while, in the time of famine, lest he might be induced to sell at a somewhat cheaper rate; not by any motive of humanity, but by—they hardly knew what. If anything could have made Ellen arraign the justice of *Him*, who *is* justice, it would have been the aspect of fatness and abundance of that bad man's homestead at such a time. Yet the man they hated they had scorned to rob. His barns continued full; his sheep fed untouched upon the mountains.

Ellen sunk upon the broken remains of a rustic seat, and burst into a violent flood of tears. She could not tell, and did not think, how long she had wept; but her attention was roused by the violent motions of Bran, who sprang about in strong joy, at something which had given him pleasure.

She looked up, and saw the very person whom she most wished to see, and yet felt she ought most to avoid; one, whom though she tenderly loved, she had not of late approved:—it was Lawrence Macarthy.

"Ellen—dear Ellen! how is this—why, you are worse than I expected, the shadow of yourself!" he exclaimed, "No, this is no time to turn away from me, when death, and misery worse than death, is all about us. What have I done to merit this? and how," he added, passionately, "how can you be so weak, as to credit the false tales of lips to which truth is unknown?" Ellen continued weeping, but did not extend her hand to her brother; the young man, much moved by her evident distress, leaned upon his gun, and gazed on her in silence. He was not as old by several years as he appeared; for a habit of command over everything but *self*, and constant exposure to sun and wind, had aged him much, so that Lawrence Macarthy, at two-and-twenty, looked at least four years older. His person had become a model of strength and beauty, so firm set, and active, yet withal so muscular, that few would have cared to try their powers with him in a wrestle for life or death. His carriage was remarkably free, erect, and careless, with an air of too much defiance to belong to a man of peaceable habits. His deep-set eyes might have been thought black; but they were gray, shaded by thick, and long eyelashes of such exceeding beauty, that they gave a softness, and at times, a sweetness to their expression—such as might have become a

woman better than a man ; his eyebrows were straight to severity ; his brow was bold, broad, and massive ; his nose thick, and the nostril proud and swelling ; the upper lip, in general so grievous a mistake in the national physiognomy, was short and curved ; but the mouth was large, and the muscles were loose and flexible—an eloquent, rather than a powerful or determined mouth ; it was a mouth which you feared would hardly give forth in fitting language the high imaginings of a rich and fertile mind. The chin and mouth harmonised well ; they were, if not sensual, at least lovers of pleasure. Mask the upper portion of the face, and you would conjecture that the lower belonged to a voluptuary ; conceal the lower, and you had the index of a hero. At the button-hole of his dark green shooting-jacket hung an old-fashioned silver whistle ; his shot-belt was fastened by a broad buckle of the same metal ; and his powder-horn, richly mounted, glittered in the sun. It was evident that Lawrence, as the glensmen said, “took pride out of his rifle.” Like his other accoutrements, it was old-fashioned, and of foreign make ; but it was bright and polished ; the lock and mountings were of exquisite workmanship ; the barrel was long, and smooth enough to joy the heart of a Red Indian.

We have written, that he *leaned* upon his gun ; but he loved it too much to *lean* upon it ; it rested on the ground, and he clasped it lovingly within his palms—as a treasure or a friend. There was nothing, save his natural bearing and these implements of the chase, to distinguish Lawrence Macarthy from the half class—neither gentleman nor farmer ; his shooting-jacket was worn threadbare, and the other portions of his dress were those of an ordinary peasant. Although always accompanied by one or two dogs, he was too proud to ask leave to shoot on any domain—taking the wild and distant mountains and lakes as his sporting ground. And yet, more particularly during the preceding eighteen months or two years, the neighbouring gentry passed him with scarcely a recognition ; he was as ready to return their haughty stare as they were to bestow it. His want of popularity with the higher—the dominant class—was amply compensated by the devotion of the “Cottiers.” Every houseless man, every homeless woman, every bare-legged boy, and ragged girl, blessed him ; the very beggars, as he passed, let their outstretched hands drop by their sides, whispering, one to another, “Sure we’ll not *let on*, it’s begging we are, to *him*, for it would *scald his heart to have nothing to give* ;” and instead of the usual imploring words, and more imploring tones, wished him “a fresh blessing,” “a power of good luck,” “the top of the morning,” or some more deep and hearty prayer, in a voice as cheerful, as if they knew no sorrow ; these greetings he failed not to return.

Ellen still continued to weep, and he to look at her, until it might be, the sun shone too fiercely in his eyes ; certainly tears gathered there, and (for he scorned them too much to wipe them away) hung upon the long lashes.

"I see how it is," he said at last, "you believe all you hear against me, ay, and maybe, in your own mind add to it—"

Still Ellen Macdonnel made no answer.

"Isn't it enough to have starvation and contention abroad, without letting them force from every cup the small, small drop of sweetness, the sweetness of affection left us in this land of slavery?" he continued.

"God knows it is," murmured Ellen, "and God knows how bitterly I feel *that*—desolate as I am."

"Ay, Ellen, *that* is of a piece with everything else that is done by the rich for the poor in our country; their charity is to use, not to succour. That black-hearted, bigoted beggar, Richards, used to cast up his eyes and talk of his angel lady's charity in bringing up a cast-away. By—if I had been a man when he called you *that*, he should not have lived to say it again; and as it is, my debts to him are not yet discharged."

"Hush!" said Ellen, "there is too much death around us to talk of vengeance; the Lord has taken vengeance into his own hands."

"It has fallen on the innocent then," he said, with a fierce, proud look. "The rich have either fled the pestilence, or fortify themselves within their houses, doling out charity with hands palsied in returning pence, but active in taking pounds—like the cold, proud woman, whose funeral almost cost me my life. *Your* young bright face was a sunbeam in her house; you went abroad among the poor, and came back laden with blessings that reflected upon her, and what did she do to one she was bound to cherish? She left you to her husband, and he, after letting you grow up a woman, the mistress of his house, leaves you to—Oh, Ellen! bitter is such nurture—accursed such protection."

"Stop, Lawrence!" she exclaimed. "Can *you* wonder that I will not hear you? It is many months since we met. You know how much I loved the only parents I have ever known, and yet you seem to think it will pleasure me to insult them in their graves. Oh, can you wonder, I again ask you, that I will not hear you?"

"A very little time ago, Ellen," he said, "and your mind was as free as my own; you rose, though not more than a child, against the bigotry and intolerance of that proud woman. You *saw* clearly—you *felt* keenly—you were all but saved—you loved your country as an Irish woman ought to love it. I have seen your lips blush scarlet with indignation when you cursed those invaders, heart and soul."

"Then God pardon me if I did, Lawrence. What right had I to curse—I, who have no power to bless; I do not love my country less than I did, but far more—my own sufferings have taught me more keenly to feel hers. When Mrs. Spencer lived, I own I rebelled against her bigotry and injustice; but surely, if men such as her husband possessed the land, we should have nothing to complain of."

"Hear this!" he exclaimed, with a bitter oath. "Did I ever think to hear you say such wretched words as these? Have you forgotten what we have read together—the injuries and oppressions of centuries? Have you forgotten what we have seen—the rise of rents, the exaction of heretic tithes? Have you forgotten the infliction of martial law, and insurrection acts? Have you forgotten the tithe book?—the Protestant grazier paying nothing for the land that fattens his cattle for the English market; while the poor Catholic who raises five acres of corn—three for market and two for his own support—is obliged out of this to pay the priest and the minister? Have you forgotten Abel Richards and the *starving out*?"

"No, Lawrence!" she answered. "Nor have I forgotten the good old man who saved the poor man's family; though I see *you* have forgotten that he and I are of the faith you would blacken and falsify." But he heeded her not—he was lashing himself into a fury, and Ellen was unable to quell the storm. He continued, "Even lately, when the sickness has been stalking through the country, the usual tithe has been enforced for the rotten potato; the tithe proctor and driver take advantage of the famine, bring up the rear of Almighty vengeance, and become in their own persons the last great scourge of the husbandman."

"Dean Graves has not done this," said Ellen, gently.

"Because he is afraid—"

"He is out of the country, why should he fear?"

"I tell you nothing but FEAR makes them human! Do I not know them all? and before long they shall have cause for fear. There's hardly a man—there is no true-hearted man in the south—who is not a WHITEBOY. Believe me, we shall have foreign help as well. 'Rouse, Ellen!—rouse and work—as you once promised to do—our standard!—the harp, free to sound, with no crown to crush her full gush of melody; the motto, the wreath of mingled laurel and shamrock. This fever, this famine, have roused those that have been spared; and England, insulting our country, by soliciting food—begging it—for 'the starving Irish!' sending us back our own meal and potatoes, that never would have left our shores but for her base gold—sending them back to 'the starving Irish,' and then congratulating herself on her charity. Does a mother talk of *charity* when she feeds her child?"

"Lawrence!" said Ellen, anxious to divert his mind, and she looked steadily at the excited and panting man who stood before her. "Lawrence! there is something more than usual stirring, to excite you thus. What new project have you moved in?"

"It is not new, Ellen. When has it been new for the worm to turn?"

"Oh!" she answered, "if I could but see a chance of the independence of my country—a chance of her not only gaining, but RETAINING independence—I would die to achieve it!—die, to render it a country instead of a province; but the unavailing struggles of the past rise before me—the rapine, and murder, and

distress, and perfidy, that have followed each successive struggle—the unworthy purposes which have actuated some, and the base gold by which others have been bought—the want of means—of training——”

The impatience of Lawrence Macarthy could brook no more, and he interrupted her—“None know better than you, Ellen, blind as you have been to the devotion of one who honoured you by his love, how ably he has trained, and how well he has provided means we never had before.”

In a moment Ellen’s cheek flushed.

“I know what ~~HE~~ says and thinks,” she replied; “and I am certain he believes his own statements; but, as I told you before, and as I told him in the brief interviews when, ignorant alike of his political views and the feeling he most unfortunately entertained towards me, my dear uncle received him at Spencer Court, I told him then, that though he had motives, he had no means. One individual cannot organise a whole people; and the last time I saw you together, it seemed to me that hope was the only aid you had received from the stranger. They may hand the dagger to you, but when the time comes, they fail to draw the sword.”

“Do you think if he was not certain of success, he would have abandoned his high position to organise us?” inquired Lawrence. “And you, who could have repaid him for this sacrifice, to turn as you have done.”

Ellen made no reply, but moved to depart. Lawrence seized her hand; she raised her eyes to his face.

“Peace, Lawrence!” said Ellen, with a firmness hardly to be expected from her past weakness; “peace! When last we met, we parted on this cause, and it will part us now.”

“No, Ellen!” said her brother; “but you should remember, it was love for you first drew him to this neighbourhood, and stirred his heart to abandon the service of the hard Saxon.”

“I cannot judge of such quick caught love,” she answered, with more calmness. “I tell you, there is no strength in him; love for me, if so you call it, could have moved to no such purpose; it was a wild and perhaps chivalrous nature, impatient of control, beating for some wild action and celebrity.”

“You do him injustice, Ellen; you wrong his noble patriotism.”

“Then God forgive me, if I do,” she said; “for if I do, I wrong that which I honour most on earth. You, Lawrence, love the country: you see what it might be, but can never be; while your associates see nothing beyond their white shirts and midnight plunder.”

“Plunder!” he repeated, indignantly. “They never plunder, they only ~~REVENGE~~.”

“Revenge!” echoed a soft, musical voice, close to where Lawrence stood. “Revenge! Ay, Larry boy! it is a grand word to sound, and there is a fine line in Homer about it. ‘Ah! I daresay you never got into Homer. But, Larry, *two*, you know, can play at it. Isn’t that it? It is a blind thing, seeing no

light, and rushing to destroy until it is destroyed. You murder me, and my faction murder you—God avenges, where vengeance is due. Ah, boy! God avenges.” And Matthew, the treasure-seeker, shook his head, while he repeated, “God avenges!” then turning, he addressed Ellen. “Miss Ellen, darling-a-vourneen, how pale ye are. Are you sick a lana? Sick or well, the blessing of yer masther, and the masther of us all, be upon you! I’ve seen a deal, Master Lawrence, a deal of the vengeance of both sides, and that makes me pity both. I praise my Maker, I see good in Roman and Protestant, and Protestant and Roman, as well as in the antiquities of the earth. We were a great nation once, dears, as I can prove by coins and other curiosities; and we’ve had a deal to put up with—a deal; and times don’t mend—no! indeed they don’t. No! times don’t mend! At Macroom, the dead wait for the living in the streets, to be buried together; and there’s no coffins for so many, and they clear them away without minding. I’m glad to get back to the school for a while,” he added, “though like everything else, it’s very lonely.”

Ellen entreated her old preceptor to return with her to Spencer Court; to this he agreed, saying, he was charged with a message from the “new master;” and ready tears sprang to his eyes. “A message from the new master to Mistress Myler, saying he would soon be home—he called it ‘*home*,’” said Matthew, rubbing his hands, “he called it home; and he’s of the right sort, no half-and-half; yes, Edward Spencer of Spencer Court’s of the right sort; and not afraid of Whiteboy, or fever—but true. Now don’t sneer, Lawrence—don’t!—I say don’t put that face upon yerself, it makes you look—”

“Say it out, Domine, it makes me look ‘Develish;’ I feel as I look, and look what I feel—that’s it. So the new slave-driver is in Cork, is he?”

“I saw him at Blarney, with the priest; and he dined with the priest; there’s news for you, and news you’ll like! and the boy who drove him told me, he as good as talked treason all the road; about wishing the people better houses, and the beauty of Ireland; and his servants in grass-green liveries—think of that. Sure no man but a friend to the boys would put his servants in grass-green these times.”

“Any time,” said Ellen, in a joyous tone.

“You’re easy caught, poor bird!” observed Lawrence. “Wait till the midsummer gale comes due.”

“Dean Graves is come over, too,” said Matthew.

“And his daughters?” inquired Ellen, eagerly.

“Ay ‘deed, are they, dear! and another whose sins were heavy enough to sink the ship.”

“Abel Richards?” said Lawrence.

“Deed ay, how well you guessed.”

“We’ve had the sickness and the famine,” observed Lawrence, “and now we’ll have Abel Richards; the worst comes last. They say, he’s to be the new agent.”

"No, Mr. Spencer will be his own agent; I heard him say that myself," answered the schoolmaster.

"Ay, his own magistrate, to charge, commit, and try; his own grinder, his own bailiff, his own drover; who doubts it!" said Lawrence.

"I do," exclaimed Ellen. "Oh, Lawrence, if the heavy hand of sickness had weighed you down as it has me, you would show more mercy."

"Did you hear when Abel Richards comes down here?" inquired Lawrence.

"'Deed I did; he came at first as far as Macroom, and was forced to go back to Cork; the man at the inn daren't give him post horses; and the curses of the people fell so thick about him, to say nothing of the stones, that he galloped back faster than he came; they heard tell, I dare say, how he kept up the price of potatoes to the poor at the time he was fattening his pigs on the pick of all sorts, until they could tell the difference betwixt a cup and a red-nosed kidney; but after all, they said, he'd get down to-night to meet the red coats to-morrow at Kenmare."

"Oh there's no doubt he'll be at his fine flourishing farm to-night," said Lawrence. "No doubt of it; it's a pleasant prospect, a great delight, Ellen, to the people who are starving—those the fever has left—to know of the wine that's stowed in his cellars, and the meat that putrifies in his tubs, and to look at the potato pits chock full, and the stacked grain! And to me, it's a fine thing for me to stand here and remember that every inch of the land we look on, ought to be mine; and yet to know, that I couldn't cross a horse of higher value than five pounds, but Master Abel Richards, by virtue of his turned coat, could take it from me!" The young man's eyes flashed as he spoke, and his voice was so loud, that the schoolmaster put his hand before his lips: but the impetuous youth dashed it away, and was about again to speak, when a wild shriek burst from the nearest cottage; Ellen saw a man with a tattered blanket round him—a tall, ghastly creature, tossing his arms, and screaming like a wild eagle; and presently, a girl with almost as little covering crept out of the cottage, twined her thin arms about him, and led him in.

"The fever madness is on poor Davy Byrne, 'dced is it; and no wonder, all he has left out of his housefull, is that one girl; he had nothing but his four bones to keep them—nothing for them to do. You'll speak a good word for Davy, Miss Ellen, to the new master," said Matthew.

"Who'll speak a good word for *her*, I wonder?" inquired Lawrence, turning fiercely on the meek Matthew.

"The blessing of the poor, and the grace of God, Lawrence Macarthy; it's a great thing to earn the one, and to live with the other—they will speak for her! the sick will speak for her—and the sorrowful will speak for her—and the poor will speak for her; because in her prosperity, she was meek and generous. The great God is her friend!—and in her sorest trials He will make all plain"

"You saw Abel Richards, I think you said," inquired Lawrence, "at Macroom!"

"Deed I did not; I only heard of him, and I did not want to see him."

"You should have had a last look at him," he muttered.

"What do you mean by that, Lawrence?" inquired Ellen, rapidly.

"What I say," he replied. "God bless you, Ellen dear, I've been too long here; we'll meet again—and soon; good-bye, Domine;" and choosing the highest part of the fence, he sprang over it with the grace and rapidity of an Indian. Ellen turned pale, and trembled so violently, that she was obliged to cling to the schoolmaster for support; a terrible dread of she knew not what crept over her frame, and thrilled in every vein. She would have recalled him, but she had hardly power to breathe, much less to speak—while the simple-minded treasure-seeker watching his bounding steps, exclaimed, "What a handsome fellow he is—with the air of a prince. Never could get more Latin than to call me Domine! no head for fractions—a brave, wild boy. Never read a book I think in all his life, but 'Keating's History of Ireland.'"

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE BURNING.

ELLEN had been away above two hours, before she was missed by the housekeeper of Spencer Court. Always precise in her dress, Mrs. Myler covered her head with her black-silk hood, took her crook-headed stick in her hand—not that any bodily infirmity obliged her to use it, but she found it needful to keep off the dogs, gather the poultry together, and sometimes to chastise the children who trespassed, or it might be an under-serving wench, inexpert at her duties—and was about to set forth to seek her truant patient, when she met her with her old friend, the schoolmaster, at the porch. At first, her reprimands to the half fainting girl, were so many and so loud, that, to divert the current, Ellen mentioned the arrival of Edward Spencer in Cork: the volubility of Mrs. Myler was at once checked.

"In Cork!" she repeated, "in Cork! and never to write a line to tell me to set the place in order; never to put pen to paper to one who was so well respected in the family; who came with them from North to South. Oh, Miss Ellen! if after all my opinion of him, he should turn out the like of that; but I'll not fuss myself about it—not I; I'll take it easy; as he brews, so he may bake. I'm not to know he's come."

"I told him I'd tell you," said Matthew.

"You told him you'd tell me, did you?" she repeated, "there couldn't be a more agreeable messenger, barring the post; sure it would be no great trouble to the young gentleman to write, what

his forbears would have done, though I know I'm only a housekeeper; and it isn't the fashion now-a-days to respect old servants!"

"I dare say he did write to you, Mrs. Myler," said the school-master, "I'm sure he did. He's not the gentleman to neglect an act of good manners to any one, particularly to you, Ma'am: but 'deed, did I forget to tell you—they shot the Post somewhere near Macroom; and I wouldn't wonder if the letter was in the bag."

"Shot the Post!" exclaimed Mrs. Myler, in bewildered astonishment; "you are not in downright and positive earnest, are you?"

"Deed am I," replied Master Mat. "The accounts in Cork were so hard of Whiteboy doings; houses burnt for having arms, and houses burnt because they had none, and the talk of Whiteboy gatherings this side of Macroom, and in all the passes—that the Post refused to go out; until one fine boy, with the courage of a lion, and the faith of a lamb, swore he'd go, and go safe; that they wouldn't touch him; that he didn't fear them; and bragged greatly. Of course, there were them in the crowd that took the wind of the word to the Whiteboys, and they won't be bragged over; so they took him in one of the passes—and shot him! Sure I saw his mother and sister, and a power of their people, bringing home the body; the poor mother went for it, her lone, into the pass, fearing to bring any one into fresh trouble. A sad and weary load she had; she drove the car herself, poor thing; the gray rocks hanging over her road, and the fox and the eagle looking down upon her trouble; and she found him with a blanket thrown over him, but nothing living near him; the rifled bags and torn letters, and his dead horse were there too—though she didn't heed them; and God gave her strength while the stars were shining above her, to lift the body into the car—and there she sat, alone with her dead! The horse turned of himself, and as he was going, all of a sudden she came on a party of the Whiteboys, as good as forty of them; and they made way for her, parting off each side, to leave the road clear—standing like so many ghosts for her to pass; but she checked the horse, and stood up and cursed them with the full, deep curse of a widowed mother's heart; and some would have punished her, and others would not—and they rushed past her, as fierce and fast as they could—like a fairy blast—the Lord preserve us!—saying she was mad. The poor horse kept on at the road, and her people met her at the cross; and it was well they did, for she was lying, all as one as gone, over the body—they thought there were two dead."

"Oh, the haythins!" exclaimed Mrs. Myler, "to murder the boy that trusted them."

Ellen turned pale, and thought—If such acts herald their struggle for liberty, what will their liberty be? "Are you sure it is true?" she said. "It is so unlike any other outrage, Matthew; so cruel and so aimless."

"Ah, Miss, dear, it's all true ; they've been gaining power one way or another, and it's mighty hard, so it is, for men like them to have the power and be hindered from using it. They've been terribly driven, Miss Ellen. First, the way their very souls are rack-rented out of them ; and then starvation—and the fever—and all together leading to madness ; for the heart can go mad as well as the head ! I think there's a line in Homer about it. But they're driven on, as I was saying, by starvation and rack-renting, and tithes ; rising against the high rents, fighting inch by inch for the bit of land, and enough lying waste all around them of bog, and mountain, and slob—fine reclaimable places to make twice as many comfortable. One can't get at the rights of that, or understand the bother they're making through the country about peace-preservation acts, insurrection acts, expense of the constabulary, prosecutions, martial law, and them little things ; but shooting the Post—the poor brave fellow doing a duty that did harm to no one ! When I heard it myself, and found how they were seizing every beast they could put their hands on, I thought it best to leave Daisy in Blarney, in Father Jasper's barn ; for I was uneasy in myself about the people and the poor little scholars, and Miss Ellen, who always strengthened me to think of ; and having provided for the beast, I set out alone, knowing nothing would hurt me, and I hung any little holy thing I had about my neck as a safeguard—and well it became me to do so, for one half of the country is dead, and the other half—mad. God look down upon them, benighted and bothered as they are—not knowing what they are after." Master Mat continued talking after Ellen had sought the quiet of her own little chamber.

When Mrs. Myler had clearly ascertained that the young master was in Ireland, and might be home that very night, she repaired to the housekeeper's room, and after sundry inefficient attempts succeeded in forcing the bell to ring—which it did at last, in a rapid unnatural manner. Mat went on talking and musing, and then talking again—heedless of the flapping of bare feet along the passages, and the throwing open of doors, until the handles rang again ; nor did he heed the exclamations or the tones of inquiry, or the electrical dictations of the housekeeper, who was guilty of the folly of expecting a disorganised Irish household to fall into order at once ; quite forgetting that she herself had been almost as neglectful of her duties to the best rooms, as the servants had been of theirs.

"It's asy talking for you, Mrs. Myler, Ma'am," expostulated the cook, "to talk of my killing turkeys to hang. Faix it's the fox, bad cess to him, that hung the last of the turkey-hens over his shoulder this very morning ; they're grown as tame as *nagurs*, the ugly devils, since the fever thinned the country, and such of the poor boys as are left alive havn't strength to throw as much as a stone aither them ; Bran has never left Miss Ellen since she took ill, and the poor terrier's not worth a *traneen* the hens are

walking 'ottomies, for Mr. Carey wouldn't give us a grain of oats, to save our lives ; and he cramming the ould coach-horses up to folly, and not a puff in 'em. I wish I'd had the luck not to let Miss Ellen see the beautiful pair of duty ducks the Widdy Murphy brought this morning, along wid a basket full of chickens ; but she turned 'em off, saying, she wanted 'em worse herself than we did ; and sign by it the widdy sould them to a Cork joulter for eightpence a couple in the avenue, under the sight of my own eyes, and the lovely ducks for tenpence—the ducks war so fat, that the widdy kep' the sun off 'em for fear they'd turn to an oil ! There's no use, Mrs. Myler, in expecting me to cook a dinner for the young master. I'll not turn *my* back on any girl in the counthrey for cookery, biled, roast, briled, or even sally-lunn, or slim-cake, but I can't cook out o' nothing ”

“ There are some hams and a tongue in the saw-dust, dry packed,” said Mrs. Myler, whose increasing bewilderment lowered her voice.

“ There was—and good right I have to know it—I went hunting everywhere for the weary cat and her kittens ; and maybe, she and her black brood didn't riddle mee hands, and they soft out of the first scald of mee praskeens and tidy aprons ; and bee the same token, Mrs. Myler, it's often ye promised mee new *rowlers* ; and we havn't so much as a *skreed* left—since the time the cows broke into the drying-ground, and we ating our bit of dinner, and swallowed bodily the last holland sheets ; it was a judgment upon you, Mrs. Myler, Ma'am ; as long as ye'd suffer us to dry the clothes on the furze bushes the sunny side of the meadow, the never a thing came across 'em ; but you must havè a north bleach green, with props and poles in it like a gallows green. Small blame to the poor cattle to come and look at such an unnatural thing.”

“ But the hams, Molly ? ” said Mrs. Myler.

“ Sure the cat made her bed beside 'em ; and betwixt herself and the jumpers, they didn't lave as much as would trap a mouse.”

“ And why didn't you tell me this ? ”

“ Where was the good of vexing you ? Sure, who'd drame of the young gentleman coming here without proper letting on ; and the counthry in such a state. Faix, one would think the quality fancies they've nothing to do but order things in from the butcher's and baker's, the way they do in Dublin. If he's any way particular in his ating, he'll be hungry enough ! We've salted down the last pig, as you know, Ma'am, to plase Miss Ellen, who grudged them the potatoes : and barring the boys can find a rabbit or a trout (dirty trash) in the river, or a draw or two of pigeons from the pigeon-house, there's nothing but the kitchen stock ; and both the pickled pork and corned beef is gone rusty.”

“ There's something broke the few bottles of sherry left after the poor master's funeral,” said the old butler ; “ but there's a quarter cask of claret, and another of Madeira—not touched.”

"And the whiskey, Morty?" inquired Mrs. Myler.

"The ground's mighty soft under the cask of *rale* Cork," replied Morty, with a very grave face, "so I'm thinking it has leaked a little."

"Oh, Morty, Morty!" ejaculated Mrs. Myler.

"Oh, as I'm a living sinner! death before dishonour!" answered the pompous old butler. "I'd scorn it, Ma'am; and it under my care."

"The Lord look down upon us!" ejaculated the housemaid, "the rain has been beating in through all parts of the roof, and to save the beds I put them top 'another, so they're all soaked through."

It was quite true that the pestilence which overspread the country, seemed to have laid a blight even upon sticks and stones; people thought only of preserving life, and careless of property at all times, they became still more careless then. Mrs. Myler indeed was one of the best of her class in this respect, she was habitually careful; but Ellen's illness, her increasing years, dread of "the sickness," and the incorrigible habits of the under servants, had done more to make Spencer Court unlike its former self in a few months, than it would have required as many years to do in an English dwelling, where all goes on as orderly and as carefully when the master is away, as it does when he is present.

"After all, Ma'am," said the housemaid to Mrs. Myler, when she came to count the blankets and finally arrange about a bedroom, "they say below, things ain't so bad after all; the coachman and groom declare the horses are up to any thing, and being a young gentleman he'll think a deal of them, no doubt; the dogs are wonderful, the men say, and a fine shot (as I dare say the master is) can bring home his own dinner any day. If the carpenter, as well as poor Jemmy Gore, the smith, had not died last week, we'd have had the windows made as good as new; but God help us! after all our trouble sure there's every chance of his never reaching the house alive—think of the poor post-boy—I'll say nothing—the Whiteboys, I'm tould, are book sworn against all landlords; and indeed it would be only right to let the poor young gentleman know this," and she glanced with a peculiar expression towards the housekeeper, to see how she received the intimation.

"Give a hint, indeed!" exclaimed the Northern, "give a hint is it, Biddy, to a gentleman not to come to his own estate because of the fear of a pack of beggarly marauders, in dirty white shirts and black faces; black sheep, enagh! that are afraid to look the holy sun in the eyes! disgrace Ireland to the young Englishman for ever, and he coming with his heart full of kind thoughts like his uncle towards us, by telling him his throat will be cut on the journey! I wonder ye haven't more pride in ye for the land of your birth! His uncle lived through all the batter—the Rockites, and Whitefeet, and Starlights, and Moonlights, and Peep O' Day

devils ; Biddy, as you know, ever since he lost the poor mistress—never, since he turned Abel Richards off, was a lock turned on the hall door ; he was afraid of no one."

"Nor no one of him," said Biddy, drily, thinking that was the secret of his safety.

"That doesn't sound respectful of even a dead master," said the housekeeper, bridling ; "and you should mind your words, Biddy Doyle, though God knows it's the truth ; for if he'd get into a bit of a pet with any of the boys he'd warn them to leave the work, and they'd just stand their spade in it and walk away, then come back quite natural the next morning, and no more about it."

Biddy agreed that he was the best master "that ever stood in shoe-leather," that he was a wonder ; and in proportion as she praised and arranged the room, heaping turf upon turf on the fire that blazed upon the hearth, so did Mrs. Myler's loquacity increase, and Biddy, presuming on her condescension (for she kept the "lower servants," as she called them, at a much greater distance than did Miss Ellen), ventured to say, "Why, then, Mrs. Myler, Ma'am, if I may make so bould, there's one thing I've often thought I'd like to know—what put such bitter black blood betwixt yerself and Mr. Richards, ould Aby, the baste, and he of the same religion and all."

"Ye'd like to know, Biddy, I dare say," answered Mrs. Myler, and she did not speak it bitterly, "and yer an honest girl, and I'm sure safe and silent, for you know all that's working through the country and yet never mention it ; yet I'm not going to tell you—no—nor no one else. I call no one of my religion whose—but no matter—there—if ye drag the quilt that way, it's into ribands ye'll shred it. Afraid of coming to his own estate, indeed !" muttered Mrs. Myler, as she struck her walking-stick rapidly on the floor, preparatory to another journey through the house, into rooms where fires had not been lit for a year, and into closets where old china and plate were to be dusted and cleaned forthwith.

There was a universal confusion everywhere, save in Ellen's little chamber ; a sort of panic seemed to have seized on the servants, who kept running against each other at every door and every turning of the long gloomy passages, and fancying that the rushing of the rapid river—the sound they had been accustomed to so long that they had usually ceased to hear it—was the noise of carriage-wheels ; and everything went wrong, the very chairs and tables seemed to stand in the way on purpose ; the supply of candles in the house was so limited that the butler, having furnished forth the stately necked silver candlesticks with long, yellow, narrow candles of home manufacture, found that none could be spared for domestic use ; but Irish invention frequently makes up for the want of forethought ; escalop shells were in several instances filled with grease, and cotton or tow wicks set therein, and they flared away with a ghastly light in pantry and

kitchen ; torches of bog-wood were placed ready for kindling by the side of the blazing hall fire, so that they might be ready at a moment's notice. As the night advanced everything seemed to assume a more comfortable appearance ; the house warmed ; for though nominally summer, it was more like an English November than an Irish June.

"I'd rather he'd come by night than by day," thought the housekeeper to herself, "if he will come to the South first—which is a great pity. I'd be ashamed the first thing he saw at his own gate should be the fever-sheet, or may be the corpse itself going—alone a'most—to the grave."

The schoolmaster remained for some time in the passage, heedless of the bustle that was around him ; and after the excitement caused by his account of the murder of the post-office messenger was over, he was left unquestioned, and alone. This would not have been the case at any other time, but the servants had a new interest. As with all Roman Catholic servants in Ireland—the exception being perhaps one in fifty—the household of Spencer Court sided with the disturbers ; there was not a domestic within those walls, except Mrs. Myler, who would have appropriated a farthing to his, or her use ; they were honest, civil, industrious ; but they *were of the "band,"* and could have looked upon burning or murder with indifference, if commanded by the powers they obeyed.

Ellen sat in her room alone ; it was a pleasant little room, communicating with a sort of French closet in which she slept ; the window, boasting the rare adornment of a balcony, overlooked the garden. Ever and anon the sound of an opening door ; the shrill call of the housemaid, the answering gruff voice of the deaf butler, or an all-powerful command from the lungs of Mrs. Myler, echoed through her chamber ; but she heard them not, her thoughts were preoccupied. Ellen's life had been devoted to thought for others ; but now, circumstances compelled her to think of herself. We have said, that brought up as Ellen Macdonnel had been, the sense of dependence—mere dependence—did not press upon or weigh her down as it would have done other girls, with as high a spirit, who had been differently circumstanced ; almost every one around her lived in the same manner, more or less ; but this had not interfered with the growth of other and most delicate feelings. Her illness followed Mr. Spencer's death so rapidly, that in the absence of Dean Graves' family, she had had no one to advise with as to her future life. Their return was a great comfort to her, and she resolved to write to Miss Graves that very evening, or go to the Glebe the next morning, if she were able. She knew, that whatever she wished to do, her only earthly tie—Lawrence—would for many reasons oppose ; and her feelings towards him, were of old affections, and new fears. She tried to guide her pen, but could not ; she had never felt her loneliness—the entire desolateness of her state—so bitterly, as on that evening. She sat opposite the window, shivering—although

a fire was heaped high upon the hearth—shivering, and weeping; the misty atmosphere without, assumed a crimson hue as the sun set; and then it faded into the deep, cold gray of twilight, through which she could hardly distinguish the outlines of those glorious mountains which had been to her as familiar friends. “Friends!” had Ellen any such! were there any who would launch the bark upon a world of which she knew so little! where there any who would, as an act of free grace, do for her, what those over whom the grave had closed were bound by every law, human and divine, to have done, and did not! leaving her lovely, young, and unprotected, the sport of fortune; a creature, the poetry of whose character had been elevated, not subdued, by her late bodily and mental suffering; whose noble, brave-hearted part-taking with the oppressed, had led her to confide in, and side with, what she now believed was the influence of an unseen party, working upon poverty; whose heart yearned for sympathy, even more than for knowledge; whose free spirit loved liberty; whose heroic nature could both dare and do; and yet, was restrained by a moral consciousness, a sort of natural right-judging, which made Lawrence Macarthy only that morning reproach a spirit that was far loftier as well as purer than his own. There were reasons—one especially—why she could not accept the shelter of Lawrence’s ruined home. How often she wept, and even wished that he had been content to till the few remaining acres of the once princely possessions of his house; and then, she could have worked, have lived and died with him; or, in open, honest, bold-faced war, she could have followed a soldier’s precarious fortunes into another land, where his principles would have permitted him to take service. But now—alas! alas! he was the most unfitted of all creatures to protect *her*.

The evening had long deepened into night, yet still she sat and wept: looking out into the darkness. Her attention became roused by a bright and sudden flame shooting upwards; it could not be, she thought, very far from Spencer Court. She stept to the window and saw what, at the moment, she hoped might be a bonfire, at the foot of one of the nearest mountains. She thought she heard the winding of a horn, and an halloo. She opened the casement; and then, certainly and distinctly, she heard a horn blown not very far distant, answered by another, and another. With trembling eagerness she watched the progress of the fire: after the first rush of light into the sky, it burnt low and red, and then gradually rose and rose like a pyre, spreading above and around, increasing with fearful intensity. After a while she could see dark figures pass, catching for an instant the brightness of the light; and, so still was the night, that she heard the halloos, the yells, and the horns, issuing their terrible warnings, or calling to the mountain-dwellers. A dreadful thought took possession of her mind, and chained her to the spot; where she continued to stand without the power to withdraw.

“The boys are early at work this evenin’, Miss,” said Biddy,

from the garden, in an unconcerned voice, as she looked up at Ellen, "and yours is the only windy in the house that has so fine a view, Miss, dear ; Mrs. Myler and the rest are *podgering* away at the work within. Bedad, if the young master comes home to-night, he can't but say that Abel Richards' house makes a fine bonfire to welcome him."

Lawrence Macarthy's words rang upon Ellen's heart ; she could hardly articulate. She fixed her eyes upon the conflagration waxing stronger and stronger ; it was the nearest approach the Fire King of the Whiteboys had yet made to Spencer Court.

"Well!" continued the housemaid, "he gave many a one a cowld death. It's a hot one he'll have himself."

"Surely, surely he is not there!" exclaimed Ellen.

"Oh! murder, Miss, they wouldn't be the fools to burn the house and he *not* in it," was the cool reply.

It would be impossible to describe Ellen's sensations ; her heart beat violently.

"I wonder," said the girl, "would they have been so soon down upon Black Aby only for the word of the soldiers that's to come into Kenmare, to-morrow."

"Oh, mercy! what a howl was that!" exclaimed Ellen, pressing her face into her hands.

"Ah, ah!" laughed the girl below, "it was a strong cry, sure enough. Well, Miss, he was no friend of yours, and—whist." She sprang upon a wheelbarrow that was under the window, and light of foot and limb, swang herself into the balcony. "If any thing—I mane any questions were to be asked—sure you and I, and that half-witted Master Mat, could well prove an alibi for Mr. Lawrence ; sure, I saw him with you all this evening."

"Mr. Lawrence!" repeated Ellen, drawing herself up proudly, "Mr. Lawrence! how dare you suppose he could be concerned in such an outrage as that."

"Outrage! I call it justice, Miss Ellen ; and so will all the countrhy. What's come to her at all," she muttered, as the moon at full, bursting through the clouds, shone upon Ellen, showing her white and rigid as marble. "God bless us, is it dead standing she is? Well," continued the girl, lifting her in her arms and laying her on the sofa, "well, I never see the likes o' that. With the glory of that fire through the countrhy, to think of her taking on so for the burning of ould Richards!"

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WARMED ADDER.

"Oh, Miss, dear!" exclaimed Biddy, while wiping away the tears that rolled over her thick rosy cheeks with the rough back of her stubbed hand.

"Oh, Miss, darling! it's yerself that has frightened the life out

o' me ; I had a wonderful drame last night, and sure as the stars are rowling above us, it's read to me, as clear as a printed book—it is indeed ; bedad an deed, I'd rayther see ould Aby burnt ten times over wid fire and faggot, than see *you* lying there, for all the world like a lily of Inchegoola ; thanks be to the Almighty yer coming to yerself again, Miss, though sorra' a thrifle of colour betwixt the faver and the fright is there in yer sweet cheek. Oh, then, Miss Ellen, you that has larning and feeling both, can you think it any detremint to see the flames of that nagur's house, mountin' up to the heavens ; carrying his scarlet sins to the judgment, and telling with their fiery tongues of his wickedness."

" Of their *own* wickedness, Biddy : of their own mad wickedness ! Oh, may Heaven pour a different spirit into the hearts of this people," she continued, fervently, " and teach them to respect law ! "

" Whist, Miss, whist ! " said the girl. " Sure you couldn't expect them to respect what they know nothing about ; the poor never hear of law, except from the man that distrains their bit of land, sends them to gaol, or houseless and homeless through the world ! "

Ellen felt hardly able to reply, yet she murmured,

" I must show you the folly, to say nothing of the wickedness of such doings, when I am able. But think, what to-morrow, what a week will bring into this heart-broken district ; already has the harrow of pestilence and starvation passed over it ; but then will come the loosened soldier ; the arrest of the innocent as well as the guilty ; and the burning of poverty's last shelter—the—the—there, I can talk no more about it, it drives me mad."

" God help us ! how wild you look, Miss, darling, but sure," and she advanced close to Ellen Macdonnel, and spoke into her ear, " sure you must know, dear, that we're not always to be tramped into the earth ; sure they say the French are for us, an' the Americays ; but, oh, murder ! to think that I haven't as much as a drop of vinegar to keep the weakness off her ! Drink this water, jewel ! faith, I fetched it myself this morning from the blessed well, on purpose to be more refreshing in yer room, and it sparkling up out of the earth like diamonds. It's a poor case I haven't a drop of the vinegar, though all the gooseberry wine turned into it last year, all in spite of Mrs. Myler, who couldn't find it in her heart to give it enough of the sugar—North fashion ! be sure it's gone over the country for the fever ; she'd never grudge the poor papists the vinegar any way ! There, jewel, don't keep looking at that fire, don't be harassing yerself watching it ; it'll soon be gone now, and sorra' a rat even in it, that is n't out of pain long ago, sure that's a comfort—better that, dear, than have them running through the world with their pison. Oh, wisha ; a weary on it for a fire, and they'll keep such a shillooing through the country about it. There, don't you see it's slackening down now. I wish the curtain would draw, and then I could shut it out from yer eyes that will look at nothing else ! "

It was curious to see the affectionate tenderness that Biddy displayed towards her "Young Lady," and contrast it with her recklessness of life; but this was no new reading of Irish character, under similar circumstances. After some delay, and much persuasion from Ellen, who longed to be alone, she left her; promising to return in less than an hour, to see how she was getting on.

The fire!—the fire! Ellen could not shut it out even when she closed her eyes, and pressed them down with her fingers—still it blazed before her. Sometimes, the river would catch its brightness, and look like a stream of lava passing into darkness—a mockery of the war-spirit, darting its arrowy tongues into the sky, flinging out flakes of crimson, in fierce sport with destruction; throwing up burning brands amid the wreathing smoke, and returning them to earth in stars and sparkles of resplendent brightness. Oh, that terrible fire! barn and haystacks, ricks of "duty turf," and furze, and stacks of various grain, legions of "duty fowl," were turned into ashes; the potatoes, which Abel Richards would rather have let rot than sell to feed the poor—his cruelty thus mastering his avarice—were roasted in the smouldering pits, The Whiteboys danced round the flames like wild Indians round a prairie fire. On—above—around—it went; the old gray horse burst forth before the fire reached his stable, but was shot by those who had sworn that no living thing should escape from Abel Richards' house or holdings. On—on—up, and around—crackling and screaming to the hills—to the stars; a wild, wrathful thing; folding and unfolding itself, in the many hues of the tyrant element; hissing and grappling in fierce combat with the material world over which it triumphed. The poor, gentle, stalled cattle: their voices of agony were lost in the savage yells of vengeance. On—on—encircling all within its grasp—the avenger! the terrible, fearless, lawless avenger! The mad rioting of the fierce untameable element—the attendant demon of revolt—was rendered still more terrible by Ellen's imagination; she knew that all the property in that bad man's house, had been wrought by fraud from the labour of white slaves; that he had drunk human tears, inhaled the sighs of his fellow-creatures, as others inhale sea breezes, to gather strength. Misery sent no pang to his heart—and death! he would sneer at the hollow eye, and the bony hand, and say, "it was good for the poor to be at rest." Yet, still, a text of Scripture, one of the laws of the great Lawgiver, seemed written before her eyes, and was sounding like a trumpet in her ears, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." And oh! to send the sinner into eternity with all his unrepented crimes! And by whom was this done! Ellen at the moment forgot all the provocation; the families driven forth to starve; the insults heaped upon a faith which, delusive though it may be, is dearer—far dearer to the Irishman than life; the whine, the cant, the hypocrisy! She forgot all; for the result—the fearful result was before her!

Lawrence too, where was Lawrence? Indignantly as she had repelled the insinuation of the girl, her heart beat violently, when she again questioned herself as to where he was at that moment—if possible, worse agony to think of, *who* was his companion. She started from her seat as her ears again tingled from the blast of a horn; at first softened by distance, then, crashing nearer among the mountains, it sounded like a curse; she withdrew her hands, and there—suddenly—in a moment—before her—on the balcony—now in the room—dripping from the river he had forded—staggered, more dead than alive—Abel Richards!

“Hide me! as you hope for mercy, hide me!” he exclaimed, falling on his knees before Ellen. “I have escaped by miracle; and before this they know it—No—you must hide me here—there isn’t one of the servants who would not shout at me, point me out to those who have burned me out of house and home—they won’t suspect the sister of Lawrence Macarthy of harbouring me. I’ll leave you all I have in the world if you save my life,” he continued, grovelling at her feet. “I’ll make ye a heiress. Listen! There were lies told of me to you—oh, I always loved the ground you walked on!”

“Wretch!” exclaimed Ellen, disengaging her dress from his grasp, while the bitterest contempt mingled with thankfulness that he was not destroyed. “Stand back. Now follow—and you can conceal yourself in the north closet.”

“No, Miss Ellen, no—they fancy that Myler is my friend, and may think I am hid there—but in your room I shall be safe. Oh! as you hope for mercy, don’t betray me. I’m not fit to die yet—I’m not, indeed. I’ll make restitution—I will—I’ll give up all for you to do what’s pleasing to you through the country, if you’ll save me—this one night!”

Language could not express her contempt, as he crouched and writhed before her.

“I’m sorry I did not stay in England! The country was so disturbed, I came to look after my little property. Sure I can go there”—he pointed to the recess where Ellen slept.

“No,” she said, “not there.”

“There, then.” He pointed to what in Ireland is called a hanging press, in which ladies suspend their dresses.

Ellen opened it. “Go in.”

“You will bar the window,” he whispered, trembling from cold and terror.

“No,” she replied. “That would indeed excite suspicion, to bar a window that has not been barred for years.”

He entered the “press.”

“You will not betray me, Miss Ellen, dear,” he muttered, clasping his hands and shuddering. “You will not. I have been a brand pluckt from the burning before now. I have still enough left to reward you. But not a word,” he added, half whimpering; “not a word even to Myler. She’s backslding, Miss Ellen—she’s backslding; the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; it

would do you no good to betray a poor sinner—a humble, faithful servant of Him—”

“Peace, peace!” said Ellen Macdonnel, interrupting him, while, pale and agitated, she looked, in her long white dressing-robe, more like a spectre than a living woman; “this is no time for blasphemy!” She had hardly spoken when another horn sounded, and though it was more distant than the last, Abel sunk upon his knees.

“Shut me up,” he muttered, “shut me up! the boards are so thin—and stop—promise, Miss Ellen, you will not betray me; do but swear it to me and you shall have all I have in the world, I call God to witness if I leave this house alive, I’ll make you rich—promise, swear—oh do, do—in pity—in pity!”

“There is no need,” replied Ellen Macdonnel, with the high and pure dignity of manner, which dignity of purpose never fails to impart; “there is no need to promise, you are beneath an Irish roof, and you have asked protection of an Irish woman.” She shut-to the frail door, and clasped it; her weakness had vanished—the mind’s strength had conquered the body’s weakness. But as she paced the room, she could hear the low-hearted creature, now muttering a half disjointed Scripture phrase; then whispering out the reward he would give, mingled with an entreaty for safety. Ellen paused; she thought over the past; she recalled the smooth, oily, sleek, bowing, Abel Richards of her childhood; ready with a toy for her pleasure, when she was in favour; and an insult when she was out of favour; and then, the “converted” Abel Richards, with sad bewailment at his fallen state: and a keen eye, and gripping fingers, playing on Mrs. Spencer’s peculiar views for his own advancement; then, the growing tyrant, cringing to the rich, and grinding the poor—yet aping sanctity. Once, he had even talked to her of love; she shuddered when she thought of *that*; and now, having escaped as by a miracle, from the mad vengeance which had fallen upon many who far less deserved it, he appeared in all the native hideousness of his low and groveling nature—the nature that devours the poor; that turns a deaf ear to the hungry; that utters to disobey the sacred commands of God—with holy words and polluted lips. There he was, trembling with fear; his eyes glazed, his lips parched; peeping, through the chinks of the few boards that sheltered him, to see the glare of his burning house; knowing that if he were tracked, nothing could save him; and that one word from her—one whisper—would seal his doom! All this passed with the rapidity of lightning through Ellen’s mind. She could hear his teeth chattering, as his huge form lay curled up into a narrow compass. Suddenly her door shook, and she perceived that by a violent effort Abel became suddenly still as the death he feared to meet—she opened it, and her faithful dog stalked into the room; old as he was, and though he had lost much of his activity, he was as sagacious as ever. He entered, and looking into his lady’s face, uttered a low, sharp bark—or rather a sound between a howl

and a bark—with every hair on his neck bristled ; he turned to the “press,” and sniffed long and loudly, then raised his head to his mistress again, as if to say, “What means this ?”

“Down, Bran, down sir,” she said ; yet the entrance of the dog at the moment, was such a relief, so positive an assurance of protection, that she threw her arms round his neck and rested her cheek on his head. The creature returned the caress by licking her fingers. “Good dog—down friend—down”—she repeated. But Bran was not so easily satisfied ; he walked to the window ; the burning had then fallen into a low, bright, glowing heap, small and concentrated, you might fancy it the eye of some fabled monster glaring from the mountain pass upon the valley and the river ; the dog looked at it silently, then raising his head to the full, bright moon—Queen of the sky ! for not a cloud floated near her—he howled a sort of chaunt, as if telling her of the evil he had witnessed,—stately and stern as a lion he turned round and without another glance at his mistress, laid down opposite the “press,” placed his nose between his rough paws, and resolved to watch and wait ; for his eyes remained unclosed, and his position as firm as if he had been carved in marble.

Presently Biddy entered with a bowl of whey sufficiently large for a bath. “I left you like a lily, avourneen,” she said, “and I find you like a rose. I’m thinking it’s all over yonder, Glory be to God ! Well, I’ll say no more, since it ain’t plasing to you ; but go to bed, dear—sorra a wink Mrs. Myler will let on one of our eyes this blessed night—barrin’ yours. And all for a master we never saw, and never may see—for he’s had warning out of the country by the light of the moon, if he’s the sense to take it.”

“He has had no warning, Biddy.”

“Isn’t that,” and she pointed to the fire, “warning enough for his sort, though I’ll not deny his goodness in many ways, forgiving rents, and the like. But, Miss, the ould acres will *rowl* back to their places, I’m thinking, if the boys can hold on—there, I’ll not be vexing you. Oh, the weary on it !—sure it’s not sitting down to read on a book ye are, this time o’ night ; go to bed, alanna ! and God bless ye—ye won’t ! Well ! now I’ll believe what my sister Betty Doyle used to say ov ye before she went to England —that you war the most resolute young lady in the country.”

After much entreaty, Ellen persuaded the girl to leave her ; but before she did, she looked again towards the scene of frightful devastation.

“It’s blue, and gray, and mouldy-looking enough, Misther Abel’s place is, now, any way ! It’s the poor innocent birds and beasts that was in it, I’m thinking of ;—maybe there won’t be a shillooing through the country ! and a dale they’ll find out by it ! Well ! my heart riz wid the blaze ; but it has sunk wid the embers. Now if Mr. Lawrence—”

“If you do not get to bed yourself, Biddy,” interrupted Ellen, “if you do not go directly to bed, I beg you will hold your tongue ; you see how ill I am, and yet you will go on talking.”

"Thath! well, sure I oughtn't to do anything to vex you, dear; sup the whey while there's any heat in it—come Bran."

"No, Bran will stay with me to-night; go at once, Biddy."

"Ye're afeered of something, Miss Ellen, dear, or it's not keeping Bran with ye, ye'd be," said the keen-thinking girl, as she swung the door in her hand.

"Afraid! no, I am not afraid; I have been protected all my life by the Power that protects me now," replied Ellen, and she looked as Biddy thought, "bright as an angel." "I am not afraid—but—but my old friend shall stay with me; for company, only for company; won't you, Bran?"

And Bran arose and put his nose, and a long, cold, hard, grizzled nose it was, into Ellen's hand, and replied in his own way by a long-drawn sort of "sough."

"To think of that!" said the housemaid, as she was leaving the room, "to think of that! If the baste hasn't the understanding of a Christian."

Ellen had no watch to tell the passing hours, no glittering time-piece to mark the golden numbers. The clocks of the house differed so widely that she could rely on none, and yet it was a relief to hear them croak or bell out the untrue time.

Whenever Richards attempted to move or speak, Bran bristled and growled, and the coward became silent. "Short as a Summer night in June," is a poet's line; it was not short to Ellen! Now, nothing but a pall of smoke, marked where the fire had blazed so brightly; the country was silent and lonely as a churchyard at midnight; there was no sound of life on hill or valley. Ellen tried to read, but fancied she was surrounded by eyes watching her every movement; she was too bewildered even to calculate as to how Abel proposed leaving the house. It might be that her sense of hearing was not as acute as usual; but the dog evidently heard something in the garden which she saw not, for he arose and walked towards the window she had shut down; but his hair did not bristle; on the contrary, he laid down his ears and whined, looked back at Ellen and moved his tail.

"What is it?" murmured Abel Richards; and then Bran gathered his lips from off his gums, with a fierce growl, and resumed his watch. Ellen had no time left for conjecture, for a rough hand shook the window, and the form of a man who pressed his face against the glass became visible. "Your promise," again muttered Richards; and again the dog bared his gums, and growled.

"Ellen! Ellen!" was breathed through the window;—it was Lawrence Macarthy!

"Oh, do not open it," said Abel, in a voice suppressed by terror.

Ellen turned her head towards him, and though she spoke low—too low to be heard without—Richards heard her, "Be still, and you are safe."

"Will you open the window, Ellen," exclaimed Lawrence,

impatiently shaking the massive frame, "I have not a moment to stay." Before Ellen's trembling hands could undo the hasps, her brother had forced them back. He was greatly excited, large drops stood upon his brow, his face was flushed, and his eyes were blood-shot.

"Why do you look so at me, Ellen; and how comes it, you are not in bed?" Ellen pointed to where the smoke was wreathing against a sky, just lighting into a pale, bright gray—an intimation of the first dawn of morning. "Ah, you are not strong enough for such a scene; but it was justice—pure justice; if it had not been—." Suddenly, the dreadful thought flashed upon Ellen, that if Lawrence, her brother, had been a mover in the terrible events of that night, he was about to criminate himself, and that in the presence of his greatest enemy—*his* enemy, under *her* protection!

"Do not talk of it, dear Lawrence, I know you were not there;" she said, rapidly, "had nothing to do with it; knew nothing of it. But tell me what you do here, what you want of me?"

"Not there!—not have to do with it!" he exclaimed, indignantly, while his eyes flashed. "Why you have heard me swear a hundred times that I would have my revenge; and yet, Ellen, I have missed it!" Ellen trembled, and thrilled in every limb; her blood tingled, her head whirled round.

"Peace! you will send me to my grave with this mad and wicked violence!" she said, wildly. "Besides, it is all a vision—a fable—a lie—a dream; you were *not* there; you were asleep, and dreamed it. You are intoxicated; I see you are; you can hardly stand—you reel and stagger; there, I saw it—I saw it the moment you came in." And she threw herself on his bosom.

"My poor sister! my gentle, well-loved, and once heroic sister!" he said, pushing back the hair that had fallen over her throbbing temples, "indeed I ought not to agitate you thus; 'but the fox is burnt out; and, though he has escaped, it is only for a time.'" Ellen placed her hand on his lips. "Can you understand me," he said, holding her from him, "can you be calm for a minute?"

"Yes, quite, if you will come out of this close room," she replied. "I am suffocated!"

"No," he answered, obstinately, "not an inch from this will I move, unless you will let me lay down there for half-an-hour to rest, for I am weary; they would rush into it before the fitting time; I wanted them to wait, but they would not."

"I knew," she exclaimed, "you did not urge it."

"I wanted no half work," was his reply. "The time was not fully come; the soldiers will be all over the country before this day's noon; they have no proof against me."

"Speak low, dear Lawrence," said Ellen, "or come into another room."

“ Why should I speak low,” he answered, raising his voice, “ or go anywhere else ; I can hardly move my limbs ; but I have these papers,” and he drew them forth, “ of our lists and passes, and one or two letters ; and if they were found, we should all be shot or hanged ; every tree would bear fruit then. I know not where to conceal them for my ruin will be closely searched, and I have brought them to you, *sister*, and charge you to guard them with *your* life, if you value *mine*.”

Ellen took the papers. She glanced timidly round the room, and saw, or fancied she saw, the cold gray eye of Abel Richards gleaming through a crevice.

“ Why not burn them at once,” she said, advancing them towards the flame of the candle.

“ You are surely mad ! ” exclaimed the fierce Lawrence, grasping her arm ; “ they are of inestimable value and importance ! Burn them, indeed ! You know not what you say ! Guard them, I charge you, by the memory of your poor sacrificed mother, as you would your life ;—safer ; for, like myself, Ellen, for your life you care little ; but as you would guard your faith and honour ! My life, and the lives of many brave friends of our country, are now in your keeping. You tremble, and change colour. I know not where else to bestow them, Ellen, or would not trouble you.”

“ Oh, Lawrence ! ” she exclaimed, “ you cannot think I feel anything I can do for you to be a trouble ! ”

“ I may reclaim them in a week, or in less, perhaps ; for our brave friend——”

“ No ! ” interrupted Ellen. “ I will hear no word of him, under any pretext whatever, Lawrence ; and you must not speak another word. Would it not be well,” she continued, in a half whisper, “ would it not be well for you to wash your face and hands in the next room ? The morning will be here in an hour, and it would look ill if you were met with such——” she was going to say “ blackness,” but changed it into “ ‘ soil’ on your face. This is some of the water of the Blessed Well, and will refresh you.”

“ No, Ellen ! ” he answered. “ I am hardly worthy of that water now ; they say it washes blood in, not out ! ”

Ellen shuddered. Lawrence had sat down, and his appearance strongly confirmed what she had said to him at the wildest hazard. He seemed more and more overcome and stupefied each moment. Still, her self-possession did not desert her. Withdrawing beyond the range of Abel’s eye, she rustled at an old cabinet, which she unlocked and locked, as if placing the papers therein, while, in fact, she concealed them in her bosom ; and in answer to his last words, she replied, “ I told you you were raving, Lawrence, and I wish I could calm you.”

“ You can, Ellen ; watch just for half an hour, while I sleep. I am so worn, even ten minutes’ sleep will refresh me. All the people in the house are staunch, except Myler, so I care not who sees me go or come. Half-an-hour—that will do. Here ! my

father's watch will tell the time ; and if all the red-coats met me at daybreak, what then ? I have been shooting—shooting rabbits ! Yes ! half-an-hour. There's my gun. Not more than half-an-hour ! ”

Before he had finished speaking, he leaned from the chair on which he sat, across to the old-fashioned half sofa, half bed, and in a moment sunk into a sleep deep and profound. The dark crimson curtains that fell from the canopy, shaded, without concealing his features, which the bright light of the lamp placed in strong relief. Ellen sunk upon a seat, so as to command the room. She placed the watch upon the next division of the tripod on which the lamp stood, and having examined the priming and loading of the gun, she laid it on her lap.

Bran maintained his original position, and nothing, except the heavy breathing which indicated the fatigued sleep of the Whiteboy, gave evidence of life within that chamber, for Abel dared not speak or move. Ellen did not venture to think of what the future might be ; she fixed her mind steadily upon her sacred bond to shelter her great enemy, when he demanded shelter, and she felt that she must leave the working out of her perplexity and danger to the Almighty. The events of the day were dancing wildly through her brain—she could place nothing in its right position. At last she murmured a few words of prayer within her mind, and was comforted. The hand was moving, she thought, slowly round the dial, and the light rushing rapidly towards morning.

Without making as much noise as would scare a throstle from its nest, the attentive and kind-hearted Biddy entered to see if the “young lady wanted anything,” and started with astonishment when she beheld the sleeping Lawrence. Ellen put her finger to her lips, while Biddy clasped her hands.

“ It's tired out of his life, he is,” she whispered to Ellen. “ And so it was for him you war waiting ! May the saints watch over him, for he's standing up for our rights ! Off must he be in less than an hour ? Well, I'll go down, for we're waiting still for the young master, and keep every one to the other side of the house ; only, for the love of glory, let him be away in time. Mr. Lawrence there, and she watching him—the two lone birds of the world ! ” and the girl stole away as quietly as she had entered.

But a few more moments remained to the sleeper : how long they seemed, and how the light increased. At last she awoke him, and he rose with the suddenness of one accustomed to a rapid *réveillée*. He looked a different creature after steeping his face in water. Then he warned her again to remember that lives—precious lives—lives upon which depended the salvation of their country, were in her keeping. She listened, pressed his hand between her own, and gazed from the window upon his rapid and energetic course, until a sudden burst of glory from the rising sun forced her to withdraw her eyes, and when she looked again, he had disappeared.

The loud growling of the dog warned her that her unwelcome prisoner was stirring. A determined movement of an arm that had gained strength with daylight, loosened the fastening, and Abel Richards glared up at Ellen Macdonnel. There remained but few traces of the servility of the slave, but there was an evident increase of insolence in eyes never respectful to women. He knew that he was still in Ellen's power, but he also knew that *she* was in *his*. He could hardly master his thirst for vengeance, yet he tried to frame his words.

Ellen knew him, and she listened silently to the half-muttered prayer and entreaty which crept from his lips. Still she said within herself, "I have done right—I have not betrayed—I have not violated the hospitality of my country."

Richards began entreating, as the morning advanced, that she would devise some plan for his escape. This she could not do; the contending emotions of past hours had overwhelmed her; and the preservation of the papers from Abel, whose gaze was perpetually wandering towards the cabinet, seemed more necessary to her than existence.

"Is he gone, Miss?" said Bridget, whose approach this time had not been noiseless. "Is he gone? Oh, wisha! glory be for that, any how. There's a set of the beggarly polis, and a magistrate on the road, and they'll cross the strame at the bottom of the meadow. Mrs. Myler's closing the window for fear they'd be axing something to eat, and so little in the house. I'll be back in five minutes, Miss, dear."

"Now!" said Ellen, throwing open the doors of the press; "now, go!"

Abel did not need a second summons.

"Along the walls—to the fir plantation—and in that, to the river. You will meet them; and *may God so deal with you as in this matter you deal with me!*"

Just escaped, as he was, from imminent and deadly peril, and all through the honourable feeling of the noble-hearted being who stood before him, Abel would have been worse than a demon to have planned at that moment a ruin that would have destroyed all she, lone and desolate as she was, held dear. The delight of newly-given life was with him; the fresh, pure breeze of morning rushed around him. He glanced at the cabinet; but still he felt his position to be not entirely safe. In words, he blessed Ellen, and though she shuddered at such a blessing, it is but natural to believe that when he held up his hands towards her, after sliding from the window, that once—once—perhaps once only, stimulated by continuing peril, and appalled by the danger from which he had almost escaped—surprised into gratitude by an excellence which, if he could not understand, he could marvel at, he meant really to express that which his words implied.

Ellen must have swooned, for when consciousness returned, she was on the floor, and Bran was licking her face. Was it a dream, or was the past reality? At first, the truth broke gradually on

her mind ;—the fire—Abel—Lawrence ! Strange voices came from the glen of the river. Raising herself, she crawled on her knees towards the window. Armed men were in sight; some she fancied moving towards Spencer Court. The papers ! pressed as they were upon her heart—still she might not be able to preserve them. The thought, rapid as lightning, rushed through her brain, and rising with difficulty, she left the room.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE LOVE-HOPES.

THE afternoon of a soft, warm, breezy day, was drawing towards evening. Beneath the thick yet tender shade of an avenue of fragrant lime trees walked a lady and gentleman, too much absorbed in each other to note external objects. The Lee—the loveliest of the many lovely rivers of Ireland—floated in silent gladness within a few yards of where they loitered. A full chorus of sweet voices of singing-birds freighted the air with melody — the fragrance of the richest wild-flowers had been pressed out by a herd of cattle passing along an adjoining meadow to the farm-yard, from whence were heard the cheerful lilt of the milkmaid, and the merry laugh of the cowboys. The landscape was closer than Irish landscapes usually are, and but that the gate through which the wanderers had passed into the avenue, hung upon one hinge, and the pillars were leaning in opposite directions, Edward Spencer might—if such a matter could have occupied a portion of his thoughts—have fancied himself in his own prosperous county, instead of in the wild and picturesque land of his fair companion—Lady Mary O'Brien.

He had, however, either forgotten that he had forwarded an announcement of his intended arrival at Spencer Court on the previous evening, or was altogether heedless of the anxiety the preparations for his visit must have occasioned the good Mrs. Myler and his expectant household. He was evidently intent on one object, and had no thought to bestow upon aught else.

“ But will you not hear me ? ” he exclaimed, while attempting to regain the hand the lady had withdrawn—not from a spirit of coquetry, but because at the moment she was really and seriously displeased. “ Will you not hear me ? ” he repeated.

“ No, Sir, ” she replied, “ I will not. There is nothing you can say on this subject that can be either agreeable or right for me to hear. You have broken your promise ; made solemnly to me when we met, as you know, accidentally, at Clifton ; that no matter where we might again meet, no matter how frequently, when or where, upon *that* subject your lips should be sealed for the next twelve months. Is it fair, is it just, is it honourable to pursue me here ? to watch, and trail, and track, and follow me ? I met you at dinner, and then you assured me you were to leave

town immediately. I trusted to your word, and was entirely myself because I believed in you. But when I found though your letters had arrived, that day after day *you* lingered where, owing to my brother's illness, I am compelled to remain, until he is sufficiently well to return home—when I find that I cannot leave his bedside in the house of the old friend who offered us this refuge out of the noise of the excited town, without being waylaid—”

“Waylaid!” repeated Edward.

“Certainly. I can find no other word to express my meaning; and if it offend you, how much more must the act offend me. You have degraded me by this persecution: you make me fear what even servants may say if they see me walking with you.”

“We have known each other from childhood,” observed Edward in a softened tone, “and before you became another's I loved you.”

“You never told me so,” she replied.

“But you knew it.”

“The past has nothing to do with the present,” she answered; “at least,” she added, after a moment, “the past of our young days; but the past of my woman's life must have its control over my present and my future. Unless for at least a year, we can meet without reference to—to the interdicted subject, we shall not meet at all. I see you mistook my unconstrained confidence in your promise, for a changing, perhaps a light mind.”

“I should hardly expect forgiveness from above for such a sin as *that*,” exclaimed Edward passionately. “*You* light-minded! Oh no, I know the depth and earnestness and purity of your heart too well for that.”

“I am,” she continued, without heeding his interruption, “often light of word. Of a naturally cheerful spirit, and I would fain hope, a grateful mind; thankful for the good given, and the evil spared; I may seem forgetful of the great sorrow of my still young life; but it is not so. HE is often before me—by my side, not as a phantasy, but palpably; often I hear his voice, so low, and sweet, and solemn; and if I sing or say what would have given him pleasure, or feel one of the higher and holier emotions of our better nature, then my heart beats more quickly, with the hope that the communion of heavenly with earthly spirits is no fancy—that he sees and sanctions what he so deeply loved.”

“Another loved you longer and as tenderly,” murmured Edward.

The tears in the lady's eyes flashed before him.

“You are selfish,” she said, coldly; “when I am thinking of him, you are thinking of yourself. If you cannot simply be my friend during the next twelve months, we must meet no more. I wonder,” she continued in a voice of more intense displeasure, “I wonder, with this band upon my cheek, and my sable weeds

that you dare persist. You know that when in your mother's house I never loved you ; never regarded you save as a brother."

" But you know such was not my feeling. From you, Mary, I first learned to love the land upon which we both stand. You were the first who opened my eyes to the wrongs inflicted by my country upon yours. You made me resolve, if my uncle's property ever became mine, to adopt your country as my own. So firm was this resolve, that if you had still been the wife of another, for your sake I would have cast my fortunes here. You have been many months your own mistress, and yet——"

" No more ! " she said. " If you avoided this topic, we might have taken counsel together for the good of this poor people ; we might have thought with, and for each other ; but your perseverance has prevented this. I cannot trust you."

" If you will only say, Lady Mary, that at the end of one or even of two years you will be mine—if you will simply say yes to this, I swear to you most solemnly, that I will never, during the interval, intrude upon you a single allusion to the hope upon which my existence depends. Oh, you know not what it is to drag on life without hope."

" Do I not," she answered, in a voice trembling with emotion. " Do I not ! Alas ! I have no sustaining hope for this world now. My natural buoyancy of spirit supports me ; and my national contentment and sense of the demand society has upon the young to contribute to its happiness, call upon me to forget myself ; but when the day is done, and I retire into my own heart, then indeed I am alone—alone, utterly and hopelessly—a creature who amuses without being amused—who scorns to ask the sympathy of tears, and whose heart is indeed buried with the past. With such feelings could I make you the promise you require, when, at the end of the appointed year, I may be as I am now ? "

" You assured me you would struggle against this," said Edward.

" And so I do," she replied. " What you offer would tempt any one whose heart is not buried as mine is, in the deep sea. My father's difficulties, and his late sorrow on my eldest brother's account, are crushing his head, untimely white, into the grave. My narrow means insult my rank, and confine me to the mere necessities of life. You would at once make me rich, and mistress over the people I yearn to serve ; yet, though I honour your generosity and appreciate your love, I cannot return it. Leave me for a year ; and believe that if ever I give this hand again, it shall be yours. So far I promise, but no farther."

He bent his head, but made no answer.

" Edward," she added, " you seek a strange fortune—a hand without a heart—a woman of another faith—dowerless—and proud."

The young Englishman now poured forth his entreaties for a promise that the lady would be his wife—at some period—any period—no matter how distant : but nothing could change her

determination. No one who knew Lady Mary only in society, would have imagined the bright beautiful creature so full of wit—so seemingly inconsistent, to be so stedfast, so high in principle and purpose. Edward's forgetfulness of all other engagements; his importunity, encouraged as it was at first by Lady Mary's frank and unconstrained bearing; his sudden and earnest protestations of affection; had quite a contrary effect to that for which he hoped. Their interview ended by her determination not to meet him on any terms, or under any promise he might make, during the next twelve months; but she consented to receive his letters. He gained this point by a marvellous exercise of *tact*. He represented the difficulties he should meet with (she knew they were more numerous than he anticipated); and promised only to write when he wanted advice as to the management of the people on his estate in these troubled times, or when perplexed by the readings of law and justice, which seemed to him so different from what are considered law and justice in England. Their casual meeting had revived all the passion of his early days, for the only woman he had ever loved with the intense earnestness of his calm deep heart. Edward's love was neither one of fancy nor of fashion—it was part and parcel of his existence. He loved Lady Mary before he knew what love was, her marriage struck him as with a mental palsy, all his faculties seemed for a time suspended, but he never breathed his disappointment to any living creature; he had removed a tress of hair from his bosom, but replaced it there when he heard she was a widow. He said truly that he first loved Ireland for her sake; he might have added, that her slightest word was graven on his heart; that when, as a boy, while she was little more than a child, spending her school vacations at his mother's house, though he seldom played with her, he would treasure up every flower she gathered, repeat within himself the songs she sung, and trembled if she but touched his hand. The man's intercourse with the world never destroyed the feeling, though his habitual self-control diminished its apparent power; while she, seemingly so gay and thoughtless, nourished a memory which had been the romance of a few short months—a Juliet passion—as sudden, as intense, and yet all enduring. All that has been written in song, or told in story, of love and its effects, falls far, far short of its reality. Its evils and its blessings, its impotence and its power, its sin and its holiness, its weakness and its strength, will continue the theme of nature and of art, until the great pulse of the universe is stilled. Arising from the depths of misery, descending from heaven the most direct and evident manifestation of a divine and self-sacrificing spirit, it is at once the tyrant and the slave. Happier as the latter than as the former, for the perfection of love is obedience; the power of obeying what we love is, at all events, the perfection of woman's happiness. And so Lady Mary had found it during the brief life of him she mourned beyond the power of words to express.

When Edward Spencer parted from her that evening, it was with a determination to do something—he did not at all know what, but something—that would surprise her into love! The reasoning and motives that affect ordinary women, could have no effect with her. She embodied the wild, high, romance of her country, with a feeling still more high and more holy; the more fascinating, because it was not manifested by any outward show of sentiment or exhibition of grief.

The romance of the one was deep and fervent as that of the other. An ordinary observer could have fancied them formed to constitute each other's happiness; but while Edward had been captivated by the Irish maiden's brilliancy, she had not been touched by his worth. Had he been less perfect, she might have loved him; for certainly her husband, to whose memory she was so devoted—brave and distinguished though he was—had yielded to outbursts of temper, and fits of despondency, that would have tried, and perhaps shaken, the love of an ordinary woman.

Edward Spencer had taken a boat to the lady's temporary retreat on the banks of the Lee: and when, after two painful interviews, he resumed his seat, the whole scene was as tranquil and beautiful as though the oars of the rowers dipt in the waters of an enchanted lake.

“We heard strange news, plaze yer honour, from one who had it a minute agone from a travelling ‘oman. All Cork’s astir wid it before this,” said one of the men to Edward Spencer, who neither heard nor answered. But Irish loquacity is not easily checked, and he continued: “Why, then, maybe yer honour’s strange to the country?”

“His honour’s no such thing,” interrupted a third person, whom, if Edward had observed, he would at once have recognised as the Blarney car-driver. “His honour’s no such thing; and more betoken, he knew Abel Richards better than yerself. Didn’t he ‘crass’ with him and the sweet lady he’s just been visiting, God bless her!”

Mr. Spencer heard *that*, and felt his cheek flush.

“That’s just the way, Jim,” continued the carman, who sat where he ought to steer; “that’s just the way the flowers do be growing—the nettle be the side of the primrose, and the bouch-lawn forenint the violet.”

“Is it himself,” said the younger rower in a lowered tone, “that’s the nettle?” and his eye glanced towards Edward.

“Faix, no; but Abel Richards, that was.”

“And none to say, ‘rest his sowl!’ Oh, then, isn’t it shocking for any one to live through five-and-forty years of this life, and lave no one behind to say, ‘rest his sowl!’”

“Whose soul?” inquired Edward.

“The sowl of that flinty-hearted nagur, Abel Richards, plaze yer honour, whose place tuck fire yesterday evening, and burnt him and every thing belonging to him, stock and lock, barn and brick, cattle and fowl, last night—so I heerd tell.”

"And I'll go bail, they'll set the report about that it was the Whiteboys' doings," said one of the oarsmen.

"Sorra a surer thing than that you ever said," was the comment of another.

"Abel Richards," repeated Edward Spencer. "Did you say burnt to death?"

"Musha, ay. What else? and small loss. The fire took what the starvation left. Though, while there's so much false swearing in the country, and the soldiers ready for murder, I wouldn't be surprised if some poor innocent boys war hung for it!"

The account of the burning, with a lengthened character of Abel Richards' extortions and injustice, was eagerly and carefully repeated to Edward Spencer, who, at any other time, must have noted how utterly careless the narrator was of murder, and how completely, like Biddy Doyle, he identified himself with the party that considered destruction a duty.

"Setting a case," he said, "that they did consort together, and punish the hard-hearted 'reprobate,' who had 'massacred' the country without judge or jury, for many a year, who could say wrong they did? Sure they knew well enough there was no justice for them; nor never would be, while things staid as they were."

Edward would have combated, with as much judgment as kindness, this opinion, but his mind was otherwise occupied. At one moment his spirits sank, and he who had been so full of enthusiasm for the country a few brief days before, though he would not confess it to himself, wondered why, in defiance of the counsel and wishes of his friends, he had ventured to Ireland when it was in its present "disturbed state." Yet this was but a passing thought; his determination to do "something" that should win the approbation and love of her who loved her native land with the untarnished affection of brave descent and unchanging truth, rushed through his mind, and was succeeded by a return of the right principle, of affording protection and careful watching to those who "laboured on his land." The unconnected fragments he had heard of the outbreak near Spencer Court, which at any other time would have stirred him up to inquiry, and induced observation, passed almost unheeded; and, quitting his boat, he was walking mechanically towards the hotel, when the carman, taking advantage of a crowd which impeded Mr. Spencer's progress, whispered,

"Plaze yer honour!" Edward turned round hastily, for he was in an irritable humour, and became annoyed at being followed, and there stood Darby. "One that wishes yer honour well, bid me give this to ye yesterday morning, but I didn't." He presented Edward with a twisted scrap of paper.

"And why did you not?" said Mr. Spencer.

"Bedad, Sir, because there was no occasion. I knew yer honour had countermanded the horses ye'd ordered the night before; and I says to myself, 'His honour's a resolute gentleman,'

says I, 'and one that, if ye tell him not to do a thing would be sure to do it, just to show he's resolute ;' but any way, ye wouldn't have reached the place last night. We settled all that safe for yer honour ; for if any thing"—he drew close to Mr. Spencer, so close as to speak almost in his ear—"if any little accident had happened you just through a mistake, when the boys' blood was up (and they're liable to accidents), we'd have been fairly heart-broken ; faix, I wouldn't have bothered yer honour at all with her 'bit of writin,' only for the promise I made her ; and maybe yer honour'll give it back to me now. It's all one, for it's as much as I could do to read it, let alone yer honour."

"And did you dare to read a letter directed to me ?" inquired Mr. Spencer, as much perplexed as provoked at the coolness and strangeness of the man's communication.

"Ah, thin, sure, Sir," he answered, "if I didn't read it, how would I know what was in it ?"

Edward could hardly forbear smiling at the *naïveté* or impudence of his acquaintance, who seemed to think himself privileged to thwart his movements and read his letters. And while he was debating what to say, Darby exclaimed,

"Whisht ! it's not manners for me to be discoorsing this way, we might be suspected—and Lord save us, if there isn't the soldiers !" Darby did not wait to finish his sentence, but lost himself in the mob, who were inspecting preparations for the departure of a coach for the West ; in more than their usual numbers, and strange to say, in almost silence.

They saw the guard was doubly armed, and they intimated their knowledge of the fact to each other, rather by signs than words. When the horses were to, and one passenger inside, a policeman took his station on the roof of the machine, his appearance was greeted by a yell as of a hundred demons, which did not cease nor diminish until the coach drove off ; then there was a bustle in the streets, usually so encumbered with masses of idlers. The beggars forgot to beg, and asked for what the Irish always covet—news. Some said one thing, some another ; but all agreed that there had been a dreadful deal of destruction. Each shop door had its little knot of such zealous talkers that there seemed no listeners ; let the news be what it might, all rejoiced to have something that was new to talk about. A stranger in Ireland is always astonished as much as attracted, by noticing pretty, and really modest faces looking out of open windows ; young ladies who blush at being stared at never scruple to stare their eyes full, and Edward thought he never had before seen so many respectable females, gazing from their houses into a public street. Every casement was open to catch "the news," and fair necks bent forward, and ringlets floated without control ; there was more anxiety manifested to hear what was going forward than horror at the greatly exaggerated circumstances detailed with much eloquence and gesticulation. Presently a detachment of military marched into the street where Edward lingered,

followed by a much larger gathering of fierce and excited people ; shaking their dissevered rags in mockery, pointing their long fingers, which starvation had rendered fleshless, towards the self-possessed soldiers, hooting and execrating them as they continued their even tramp—tramp—tramp—and shouting out in their emphatic idiom and harsh voices, most bitter taunts mingled with sarcasms keen as cutting : inquiries as to the amount of bravery that was required to murder a woman, or fire “a house full of childre.” Any one would have imagined that it was they who had perpetrated the late crimes, instead of being made the instruments to punish them.

Edward could hardly believe that this was the same mob, consisting of the self-same helpless people, who had that morning whined forth their solicitations for “a halfpenny for God’s sake, to help the price of a weight of potatoes to save us from starving.”

Suddenly several, flushed, heated, and strange men appeared amongst them ; men who seemed to have travelled a long way, and who grasped their shillelas with strength and determination. Mr. Spencer did not see in what direction they came, but his quick observant eye recognised three or four such amongst the crowd. Some spoke loud in their native language, others low and whispering ; but whatever they communicated had the effect of immediately stopping the human tide ; the soldiers were permitted to continue their march free from the insults and excitation which was converting the smile of disdain into the frown of revenge, and impelled apparently by one feeling, the crowd directed their course along the Mall in the direction of the gaol. The suddenness of this movement was afterwards explained to Edward—they had learned that several Whiteboys were in custody and were about being committed to the county prison. This accounted at once for the diversion which allowed the military to proceed on their way.

“There’ll be more murders done than the upset of a post-boy, that’s neither flesh nor fowl, as a body may say, Mr. Spencer, dear !” exclaimed the rich brogue of Mrs. Counsellor Hackett, who grasped his hand and shook it as heartily as if she were his godmother, and had not seen him for at least twenty years, “that there will, dear, or the burning of ould Richards either—though he’s not burnt they say ; so the black gentleman (it’s not manners to name the other word) hasn’t got him yet—the ugly turncoat. Doesn’t it prove the slavery the country’s in, to see them red coats marching through its heart’s blood afther a bit of a fire that’s out these twice twelve hours ? And then having it for a cloak just to hunt the poor innocent mountain boys and string them up like red herrings ! Oh, Sir, don’t look at me that way, as if yer heart was turning against the people, afther my taking as good as forty oaths you were one of us, and the counsellor grigging me, as if I got no strength for my words out of the ‘grass greens,’ to say nothing of a lady that shall be nameless. Well, I hope you’ll be as happy at the end of twenty-five years as me and the coun-

sellor, that never would have a word, only a little syllable now and again, when he puts too much stiffness in his fifth tumbler—not that it does him any harm, only on account of keeping up his dignity. And, indeed," she added, with something of an offended air, being too much occupied with her own eloquence to observe the Englishman's flushing cheek or indignant glances, "indeed, if ye'd taken a turn in the court-house ye'd have seen worse sights than the counsellor in his glory. It's work enough he'll have at the 'sizes, defending the poor boys after this—the creatures that have no friend in the law but himself! hard work, and a trifle of pay that wouldn't powder his wig; next neighbour to nothing, as one may say, only for the prayers—the holy prayers, Mr. Spencer, of the poor, that are showered down on him. And as I say to him sometimes, 'Phil, darling, never heed the pay, the prayers will tell up in the long run—and they'll be less wanted when the time comes.'"

Edward bowed off Mrs. Hackett as politely as he could, and on regaining his apartment at length, he found a note from Mr. Graves, who, despite the disturbances, had gone down to the country on the day originally fixed for his departure. The letter was wise as kind, inviting him to his house, saying that he thought his presence in the neighbourhood just then might be productive of great good, and reiterating his old request "not to judge harshly of the people."

Edward Spencer had hoped much from his interview with Lady Mary; but any further attempt to win her to a promise or extort one from her in her present mood would completely destroy whatever hope he still cherished. His zeal in the country's cause had been marvellously overshadowed during the last few days by his love—the very love which now stimulated him to plunge at once into the troubled district, where he believed it was his duty to be. He was certainly strengthened in this resolve by his earnest and entire desire to be of use; to protect his tenantry; to throw himself into the breach as it were; and not without a sudden hope to find himself in some delicate and peculiar position where he should be obliged to ask the advice of one so thoroughly acquainted with the country as Lady Mary O'Brien.

As to his *ménage*, it had been in strange confusion. One of his servants, a stupid, burly lout, who had never been sober since he landed in Cork, took occasion to say, he was very sorry, but it occurred to him that he had a mother and four sisters dependent on his exertions, and so he would rather go home: he would relinquish a month's wages sooner than remain in the country. The other, a delicate sentimental coxcomb in livery, did not give warning, but demanded increased wages "to pay an insurance on his life for the benefit of his family." This cool impertinence Mr. Spencer resisted by giving him his dismissal, and applied to the landlord of the hotel to recommend him servants, who would, at all events, suit him for the present: which he had done, with the gratuitous observations upon those he had parted with, "that

though they were mighty neat in themselves, he'd defy any of the Irish servants to be more idle ; and that it was exceeding troublesome for the peace of a house to mix them ; it was so natural for them to hate each other. It was better," he insinuated, "to have them all English, or all Irish,"—that like everything else, there could be no medium ; " they must all drive the same way, or there'd be murder among them."

Certainly nothing could be in richer contrast than his past and present attendants ; the former, quiet, calm, independent—building their own respectability on their own foundation ; understanding perfectly the compact of " pay me my wages, for which you shall have as small a proportion of work as is necessary to keep my place, if it be worth my while to do so!" Neither their foot nor voice was ever heard ; they seldom disappointed their master, nor ever hurried themselves ; never were guilty of a rudeness to a well-dressed visitor, and never felt an emotion of gratitude towards their employer. And Edward was deep in his preparations when a gentleman of the highest possible Tory principles called upon him, and drew such a picture of the hopeless atrocity of all who belonged to what, in Ireland, may justly be called the *opposite* faith ; urged the doctrine of proselytism or extermination (he did not seem to care which) so vehemently, talked so long and so loud, that Edward, always given to dreams, passed a miserable night. At one time he was guided by the angel of mercy, who had taken the form of Lady Mary, into a vast arena where a multitude were assembled : too late to save a number of unhappy beings whom Abel Richards and the pope had tied to a stake, and had fired the faggots that surrounded it. Again, he was dancing a mad reel on the heather, to music produced by invisible musicians ; and was awakened at six o'clock by James, whom he had told not to call him till eight.

His new people, particularly his " personal " servant, were in a fever of anxiety from morning till night. His " man " had already established his position among his associates by reference to his master as " a born gentleman from head to foot, every turn of him showed what he was, saying thank ye, even for a bottle of that dirty trash of soda water, and letting him eat fresh meat every day—but the one—in the week ;" his very existence seemed to depend upon his master's smiles, and nothing could induce Edward to overlook his blunders, but the ready wit with which he accounted for them. He was always disappointing his master, yet always in haste to do what he had left undone, never took into account his own exertions, was noisy both with foot and voice, but declared, before he had been twenty-four hours in his service, that " he only wished he had an opportunity of travelling barefoot from Cape Clear to the Giant's Causeway to serve so good a master and (what an Irishman always over-values) so *raal* a gentleman."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE INDUCTION TO OUTRAGE.

SETTLING accounts and departing from an English and an Irish inn are two very different things. At the former, all matters are well ordered and in time ; the packing-cases and carpet-bags are moved with so little noise, that they appear to have moved themselves ; nobody helps anybody, for all seem to know their own work—and *do it*, not from any interest they take in the voyager, but simply because such is their business. At the latter, nothing is ever precisely arranged, and, certainly, never in time. The sundries are stirred by an immense degree of noise and bustle ; for here every body will help every body, and nobody has a rightly defined idea as to his own particular line of duty. Then the waiters are, each and all, so anxious that the traveller should be comfortable, and “sit asy,” and on the right side to see “the beautiful country, God bless it !” and hope that the weather will “hould up,” and that “the teems o’ rain won’t be bothering his honour ;” with a direct question as to “When his honour will be travelling this road again ?” and “Maybe he’ll be back soon,”—and all this proceeds from a natural and perfectly unaffected desire for the good of a stranger. They do not, to be sure, cherish the feeling for any great length of time, but it is strong enough while it lasts ; and it is something to know that you excite even momentary interest in the living, beating, hearts of those you meet in your every-day journeyings through a rugged world.

John Bull cheats in sober earnest ; Paddy does it for fun. It comes, as far as the stranger’s mere pocket is concerned, to pretty much the same thing in the end.

Paddy coaxes out the smallest of silver coins, with his most winning smiles, his most brilliant wit, or most insinuating humour : John aims at half-crowns and half-sovereigns, not with smiles, but frowns, not with wit, but grumblings, and if honestly and perfectly satisfied, never says so with a cheerful countenance ; while Paddy, if not sufficiently remunerated, still blesses “yer honour,” hints that he “knows it’s yer honour’s intention to remember he has a wife and a housefull of little children at home praying this very minute that yer heart may soften, and that the prayers of the poor may make you an asy bed in heaven ;” and if an evident difference of opinion exists between you—he thinking he has not been sufficiently compensated, while you consider he has been paid “twice too much”—Paddy smiles complacently on his small exchequer, and then, as the sigh rises from his heart, adds to the last blessing he bestows, the earnest prayer, “that times may mend, and not be so hard on the poor ever and always.”

The number of servants at Irish, are usually nearly double the number of those at English inns; but then, half the amount satisfies the one that would satisfy the other, and you get all the blessings for nothing, with an influx of ideas in tropes and figures,—combined with such raey humour as can be found in no other country under the sun. By a single figure of speech they elucidate a fact or produce a fiction; and by a word or two judiciously spoken, place a subject in so ridiculous a light, that you laugh frequently against your own will; always against your judgment. If the stranger's sojourn at the inn has been but of a few days, it is most likely his departure will be waisted as a misfortune, he hears murmurs on all sides of "Ah, then, it's not often we've the blessing of such fine company, good luck to your honour, and God send ye safe back." "Success to ye wherever you go, and may yer heart grow lighter and yer purse heavier the longer you live." "God bless you, Sir, and mark you to grace and bring you here safe and soon." Even the "*sculleen*," the little boy "about the place," who does every one's business, and is scolded for every one's neglect—even he, the barefooted urchin whose curly head was never covered by a hat, and whose feet are swift and sure by day or night to do the bidding of all who please to command—even he lingers without, in the hope of receiving a stray six-pence, and gives his prayer whether he receives anything for it or not.

In England, the landlord is ever at hand to bow his most respectful adieus; but in Ireland, he may be off with the hounds, or out shooting, or fishing, or gone to his country-house, or to the sea-side; or somewhere that prevents his seeing after his own business—supporting one of "his party" at a parish election—in short, anywhere but where English notions say he should be. Mr. Spence, however, was fortunate, for his landlord was on the spot, and singularly serviceable in clearing a passage for him through the beggars, who were more vociferous and importunate than ever. He got rid of them by a *ruse*, giving the "head waiter" a guinea to divide amongst them, thus directing their attention to him. His Tory friend of the past day, leaning into the carriage-window, entreated him to wait until evening, and then he could have the escort of some troops who were going to Killarney; but he assured him of his sense of security and laughed at his fears; upon which his acquaintance retreated with a shrug of despair.

Some little delay arose from the restiveness of one of the horses, who, to Edward's surprise, were evidently high-spirited, well-fed creatures, though restive and impatient, and any thing but regular roadsters; and though the harness was not bright it was sound and strong. The door and steps were crowded by all connected with the hotel; the beggars in a state of fearful excitement and insubordination, surrounded the waiter, who had not yet changed the guinea into "testers" for their accommodation. More than once Mr. Spencer looked among the crowd for Darby, the car-

driver, but instead, he saw the blooming face of Mrs. Counsellor, enshrined in a bonnet of pea-green silk, while her ample shoulders were enveloped in a pale blue shawl figured over with many colours. There she stood, kissing her hand and waving a hand-kerchief; taking advantage of the withdrawal of the beggars, and the exchanging a horse that contented itself with kicking, for one more peaceably disposed, she in her turn darted to the window.

“God bless you, Mr. Spencer! don’t fear, dear, the people are all lambs, and sure you’ll not let them be led to the slaughter. They’ll be stringing them like bades, Sir, only we depind on *you*—our trust is in you, Sir. What would we have faith in, if not in the grass-greens? Don’t let them Orange devils put their *comether* on you, don’t Sir, for the love of mercy, listen to a word they say. It’s asy to bring a poor man to ruin in this country, and call it bringing him to justice; just always keep in mind that the poor have no friends.” And then in an instant changing her tone, and darting a look full of the most fiery scorn upon a pale creature, who, with her child hanging on her bosom, stretched out her emaciated hand to Edward Spencer, she exclaimed, “Keep out of the way of my feet, Mary Mulcahy: I’m ashamed of ye, ye brazen-face. I declare I’ll have ye taken, so I will, to *dare* to meet the daylight with yer sin in yer arms.”

The pale creature pressed her child more closely, and Mrs. Counsellor continued, “Is it a crown piece you’ve given her, Mr. Spencer! Oh, then, it’s fine time the beggars have, that ought to be whipt out of the streets. You don’t know her as I do, or you would not encourage her.”

“Why,” said Edward, “you yourself, my good lady, told me just now, always to keep in mind that the poor had no friends.”

“Oh, ay, the poor fellows they pick out, you understand, for their party to sacrifice, not such rubbish as these, that think no more of pushing against a lady’s bran new shawl than they would of a stone wall.”

“Bedad! yer wrong there, ma’am,” said a dwarf, who dragged his deformities, only half hidden by his rags, from beneath the carriage, “we know a lady when we see her, whether she has a bran new shawl or not, and though my eyesight’s very good—the Lord be praised for it!—the sorra a lady I’m looking at now,” and he fixed his large animal eyes upon the woman, who only remembered the poor when they were of her “party.”

“Sir,” said the landlord at the opposite window, “we’re all right now, we’ve got another horse. There’s the priest of Blarney bowing to you.”

Edward took off his hat, and stretched his arm out to shake hands with the hearty and friendly priest. The greeting was brief; and the landlord had only time to add, “I had much pleasure in appointing the post-boy you wished for,” when the horses dashed forward. The crowd shouted, the landlord bowed,

the multitude at the door bowed and curtsied, and the last glimpse Edward had of Mrs. Hackett was her substantial hand waving her as substantial handkerchief. Edward threw himself back; and in doing so crushed a basket that had been thrust into the corner of the carriage, and which, upon examination, he found to contain a cold chicken, bread, biscuits, cakes, a bottle of wine, ham; in short, pic-nic provision for two days' campaigning, provided without order or charge by the provident landlord; a common occurrence in Ireland, and one sure to be appreciated when the comfortless state of provisions at the country inns five-and-twenty years ago is held in remembrance. On the road from Cork to Macroom nothing attracted Edward's attention, until he obtained a distant view of the tower of the Abbey of Kilcrea, looking over the green trees that cluster in front of the time-honoured pile.

The post-boy lessened his speed, as if conscious that the gentleman took an interest in antiquities; and the servant, in reply to his master's question, told him what it was, and seemed very anxious that he should turn off the high road to visit it, informing him that Master Mat, the ould follower of his honour's family, was everlastingly "rooting" after treasure there, and that it was a fine place "entirely." Edward was, however, now as anxious to get forward, as he had previously been to delay, and on went the horses with as much speed as if they had not travelled a mile.

Some little time before his arrival at Macroom traces of the fatal disturbances he had heard of were but too distinctly visible. The blackened and still smouldering walls of a cabin, which had evidently been burnt by the military, arrested his attention. A ghastly-looking dog, of large size, wounded and bleeding, sat gazing at the ruins, perhaps the only survivor of the wretched household. Further on was a still more distressing evidence of martial law; a group of women were wringing their hands, howling, and weeping most bitterly over the inanimate form of a man, who had evidently met with a violent death.

Edward ordered the driver to stop. "They murdered him like a dog, without judge or jury, for nothing," was the only explanation he could receive. "They murdered him under the tree his father planted, and where his children played." He inquired the cause, but could obtain no fact. "They took him out of his bed and murdered him—in the sight of his wife; whose arms they untwisted from round his neck—with a bayonet." He saw that this was desperately true; for though she was in a swoon on his body, her hands were cut and bleeding.

It was a scene that made his senses reel, and his firm heart tremble. He collected himself sufficiently to inquire the name of the place, of the man, and at what hour, and by whom, the act of violence (he could not consider it an act of justice) had been committed, and noted them down; then, leaving the weepers some money, he ordered the postilion to drive fast—faster—into

Macroom. It was really agonising to recall this scene, and contrast it with the natural beauty of the country ; Edward closed his eyes, as if to prevent external objects distracting his ideas, and endeavoured to collect his senses. That there must have been provocation, he entertained no doubt ; but he felt indignant at the unnatural combination of justice and cruelty.

As they drove into the straggling town of Macroom, every creature seemed in a state of confusion and distress, such as it is impossible to describe. A sort of half-maniac, half-idiotic insanity appeared to possess the people, while the military, evidently waiting for orders, wore an air of defiance and ferocity, before which some crouched, and at which others laughed. The multitude appeared to consist only of two classes of persons, paupers and soldiers. It was with difficulty that the carriage drew up to the inn door, and there Edward saw one or two gentlemen endeavouring to make their way through the crowd, so as to get round the corner of the building into the gate leading to Macroom Castle,—at that time the residence of one of the most hospitable and worthy representatives of the old class of Irish country gentlemen.

“Clear the road for the justices of the *pace*,” shouted an herculean model of the class half knave, half fool, and whole beggar. “Clear the road for the *pace*, or the soldiers will do it with grape shot and *bagganetts*.”

“Fire and soord—fire and soord to drive out starvation !” shouted an idiot ; and then suddenly fixing his eyes on Mr. Spencer, he exclaimed, “There’s a pale gentleman—a strange pale gentleman, that looks pity at us. Give us a halfpenny to buy pratees : we’re all quiet as lambs if ye’ll give us the maaley pratees.”

Edward asked to be shown into a private room, but was told there was not one in the house ; they were all occupied by gentlemen and officers, and visitors belonging to “the castle.” He entered the least crowded, and found a seat at a window looking over the stable-yard, that was backed by the fine old trees of Macroom Castle. He took out the memorandum he had made of the incident on the road, and the name of the person killed, and was considering how he should proceed with the inquiry he had determined to institute, when his name was pronounced by the well-remembered voice of the good old clergyman.

“I thought it most likely you would pass through to-day,” he said ; “and that alone would have brought me to Macroom, if other and more painful duties had not demanded my presence here. It is many years since I have known the country to be really in a state of such frightful turmoil ; not one or two cases of insurrection, but all is in commotion. You have, of course, heard of the destruction of our fellow-voyager’s house. He himself was escorted to Macroom Castle—popular feeling is so greatly against him—by a party of soldiers. We are all going in there to hear news, and to take examinations. You must

permit me to introduce you. Do not feel any delicacy at entering a house which is open to every stranger, and the hospitality of which—the moment a scout had informed its master of your arrival—would have been forced upon you before you had time to change horses. Macroom Castle is literally ‘the Hotel of the West.’ Besides, you will see much that you ought to see; all our gentry, that is, those who are in the country, will be there, and it will be well for you to know them.”

Edward could not avoid mentioning the terrible scene he had witnessed. Mr. Graves shook his head.

“Very sad—very sad,” he said. “We must inquire into it; but depend on it, it was provoked.”

“Provoked, Sir,” repeated the young Englishman, indignantly. “Provoked! what provocation could justify violence such as that? It seems to me a case of murder.”

“We will inquire,” replied the dean; adding, “it is a strange request to make to an Englishman, that he should keep cool; but I see it is a necessary one for you. You will find individuals of only one party assembled here, and all influenced, more or less, by the state of the country.”

“But surely both parties are interested in the preservation of the peace,” said Edward.

“We would hope so. But the sooner we make our way into the castle the better,” was the reply.

Knowing the dean’s benevolent feelings towards the people, and how entirely he deserved their respect and affection, Edward was surprised and grieved to observe that they avoided him; and if they did not impede his progress, did not make way, or facilitate his object. Usually ready to bless, few blessed him then. Hints were murmured that he was “consorting” with their enemies; and the mob outside the castle gate seemed inclined to force its way into the enclosure—indeed so great was the pressure against the entrance, that the man within hesitated about opening it.

“You are astonished, I see,” said Mr. Graves, “at the strange looks and cold salutations I encounter. It is only when under some momentary excitement they receive me thus. The Irish character, constitution, feeling, principle, call it what you will, admits of no medium thoughts—no deliberative reasonings. ‘Those who are not with us, are against us,’ is their motto. They never look, *or believe in any one who looks*, at both sides of a question.”

This was said in an under tone; and while the clergyman’s steady eye met the daring, the angry, the sinister, or the humble gaze of people, in various stages of excitement—suddenly an elderly gentleman advanced slowly towards the gate. There was an instantaneous change in the manner of the crowd: Those who had hats, took them off; those who had none, pulled their forelocks and scraped their feet; the women muttered prayers in English and Irish; the boys shouted—and then there was a

general "Whisht, 'tis himself that's in it—Wh-is-ht!" and all was silent. There was a mingling of dignity and freedom, the jovial look of the hunting field with the polish of the courtier, in the gentleman's carriage and presence. Nodding familiarly to Mr. Graves, and lifting his hat to Mr. Spencer, he stood for a moment so as to be seen by those without—giving them time to perceive that his bearing was firm and good tempered—and then said, "Well, boys, and what do you want now? Not potatoes, for you had a fair allowance of them this morning."

"God bless yer honour, we had full and plenty—God increase your store. If all was like you, there'd be no want in the country," was the immediate response. "And sure only for your honour, we would have been dead alive with the hunger long ago."

"And yet you will not suffer my friend, the dean, (who, by the way, is your friend as much as he is mine,) to pass in, though he has a strange gentleman with him. I am quite ashamed of you."

"Oh, Sir, that wasn't it at all; by no manes, yer honour. We war just waiting to see the man yer honour knows is in it, and that oughtn't to be there—that we might rise a good yell at him, yer honour."

"And why do you want to do *that*?" inquired the gentleman.

"Why? Why then it's yerself, Sir, that needn't ask that, for it's the first time yer honour's castle gate ever opened to him."

"Boys," said the Master of Macroom. "Boys, it is now, for the first time, you have to learn, that whatever a man's faults or sins may be, *when he is in distress* the gates of Macroom Castle are never shut against him?" He spoke in a clear distinct voice, and it was responded to by a loud hearty shout; the shouters leaping in the air, tossing up their hats, whirling their shillelas, and shaking their rags in a frenzy of delight. Taking advantage of this momentary excitement, Mr. Spencer and the dean walked into the avenue, and the master continued,

"Any violence on your part must operate against you, because it will prejudice the gentlemen who meet here to-day—not to injure you, but to protect themselves; it will prejudice them against you."

"But that fellow within, Sir, will be poisoning ye with all sorts and sizes of lies. Sure there's as good as a score of poor innocent boys sent out of the country through his means in the last five or six years, to say nothing of the houseless and homeless craythurs that's wandering and hungry through his villany; and if he had his way and his will, sorra a one standing at this gate this blessed day whose skull he wouldn't send to keep company with them poor monuments over the ould coort-house—of the fine boys that suffered for shortening the days of ould Hamilton. Sure, it's a sin in a Christian country to see their white bones in the air."

"And my beautiful boy one of them, and to lose his young life for such an ould man?" exclaimed a withered woman, clapping her hands, and concluding her sentence with an ulla-gone, in which several voices joined.

"This is very extraordinary!" whispered Edward Spencer to Mr. Graves, "glorying in their relationship to a murderer."

"They would not confess to any kindred with a thief," was the reply; "they would thank God that all their people were poor and honest, and that if they did get into misfortune, it was not for what they need be ashamed to own. They have a sort of fatality-feeling about murder, thinking it is before them—their destiny—and, alas! too frequently, their duty. Listen."

"I think," resumed the Master of Macroom, "that I have been sufficiently long your friend to be trusted, and am not likely to see any injustice done to you."

"Injustice!" repeated a stalwart-looking fellow, strong of mind and limb, with a concentrated expression of countenance—an expression implying more firmness than fierceness. "Injustice! oh, death alive, Sir! if you give any attintion to him or his we are all done for. Sure, you know I wouldn't tell yer honour a lie; and I could prove an alibi for every man that black villain will mark—I know I could; but what we're all willing as life to stand to, is, if yer honour would just listen to us, and not mind him or his at all. Sure, yer honour, when an alibi is proved everything going before is disproved; and sorra a one of the gentlemen will stand against yer honour, if yer honour only chooses. Sure, ye'r the top of the country, we all know that. Isn't it plain, yer honour, that if the boys accused warn't in it, they warn't—isn't that plain, Sir?"

"Very—but not true. How do you know against whom informations may be sworn?"

"Oh, Sir, that's asy known—every one he has a spite too—and that's every one he injured; and sorra a one hardly in the country that he has not done an ill turn to."

"No, no," exclaimed the master, with a wave of his hand, "but the country cannot remain in its present disturbed state; nothing can be attempted to lift you out of the poverty into which you are plunged until this fever—this terrible tumult—subsides. Nothing can be done for you, while the lives of those who would give you bread are endangered by coming amongst you."

"True for you, Sir; but sure we never do hurt or harm to man or mortal, *barring they keep on at us*, and then, Sir, then you know how long we trust in the Lord, and shut our mouths against both starvation and words, and chain down our hands and look our misery and hunger in the face. Oh, Sir, none knows this better than yer honourable self, and sure you won't turn again' us now."

The gentleman was visibly affected, for it was impossible to look at the impassioned speaker and not feel. At last he said,

"I'll never turn against those who conduct themselves peace-

ably; but you must respect the laws, and leave it to them to judge and punish. Your violence will destroy you in the end."

"Ah yah!" he exclaimed, "the law that punishes one side rewards the other without thinking of justice; the judging ever and always leans to the power; and if violence destroys us in the end, peaceableness has destroyed us without an end. You mean well to us, Sir, and so does Mr. Graves, I'll own that, *but you are not one of us*—God forbid you wor. Oh, then! I wonder the roof of the *Caislean-i-Fhliom* isn't raised right up from its walls this blessed night with the lies of Aby Richards—he'll swear against every man he has a grudge and a spite to in Munster; and he's as deep as he's dangerous."

"You speak," interrupted the Master of Macroom, "as if the burning of Mr. Richards' house was the sole instance of outrage. You, Jem Murphy," and he fixed his eyes on the speaker, "know better than that. Have you forgotten the poor post-boy's murder; the forcing open house after house for arms; the destruction, and riving, and marauding; the threats, and night disturbances? I tell you once and for all there must be an end of it, and if reason won't do it, force must."

"There never was a finger raised in the country against yer honour, or one belonging to you—I ask yer honour's self, is there ever a lock turned upon one of yer honour's doors? and it isn't turning away from us you'd be?" said Murphy, in a whining tone.

"I'll never turn from either friend or foe," said the gentleman. "You know how steady I've been to you; you know that nothing ever turned me, as you call it—and nothing ever shall turn me—" There was a shout, which the gentleman instantly quelled by exclaiming "Silence," in a voice that could have been heard a very long way off. "Hear me to the end," he said, "nothing shall change me, but your own violence and disregard of the laws of your country. I warn you most earnestly not only against any act of violence, but against assembling in a manner that will lead to violence. If you commit an outrage I cannot save you. Go home peaceably, and by so doing prove that no outrage can be laid at your door; go home, if you would save yourselves and your families from ruin."

There was a dead silence. "Go home, my friends, quietly, I entreat you," he repeated. "Go home; I can gain nothing by this advice—on the contrary, boys, I shall be a loser," and the look of stern and even haughty command which his expressive features had assumed was changed for one of infinite humour: "I shall be a great loser; for you will go home, and instead of a parcel of idle lazy vagabonds being swept away, you will be coming for the cutlings for the gruel, and the drop of wine for Molly and the new baby; and I shall have you all down upon me for potatoes, and blankets, and thatch, and wattles, and something to pay the priest, in as great numbers as if the soldiers had never paid you a visit. I really think you had better stay and be shot."

This ironical advice had better effect upon the miserable yet mirth-loving mob, than the gentleman's reasoning. They liked the jest and the jester, and they separated, at least for a time, with sundry exclamations of "What a mighty pleasant man his honour was, and sure it was a great blessing intirely to have the like of him in the country;" and so they took his advice, until moved by some new excitement, or made to think differently by another speaker, they re-assembled and forgot the counsel of their best friend.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SPY.

It is always much easier to get a number of Irish country gentlemen together for amusement than for the despatch of business—*mere* business; and though the lives and properties of many were at stake, yet the meeting bore too close an affinity to abstract thought to be very interesting to the majority, who gradually strolled off to inspect the kennels, bet upon some favourite horse in "the master's" stables, or dip a line in the beautiful river Sullane that waters the domain, or for any other purpose that might wile them away from serious occupation.

Edward was surprised to perceive that those who lingered in the dining-room were much more full of mirth and mischief, than care or concern; and more ready to jest, than to look grave upon the state of the country. They all, however, shook him cordially by the hand, and it was his own fault if he did not feel as much at home with them in five minutes as he would have done with his own countrymen in as many months.

Before the entire party—who, after various messengers had been despatched for them, came dropping in by twos and threes—were assembled, he took occasion to tell his host of the outrage he had witnessed on the road.

"My dear Sir," exclaimed one who was amusing himself by tossing fragments of oaten bread into a dog's mouth, "the fact is, you are new to the country, and do not understand our ways."

Edward turned so abruptly round on the speaker, while his deep intelligent eye inquired, more eloquently than words could have done, the meaning of what he had said, that the dean laid his hand on his arm.

"The fellow, depend upon it, deserved what he got, or he would not have got it," added the speaker.

"But his life has been taken, Sir," replied Edward; "and surely the military are not suffered to roughride through a country, and butcher whom they please."

"Really, Sir," said a blustering, burly, jovial-looking 'squire in top boots, a blue coat and buff waistcoat, "Really, Sir, where we have so much to investigate that is important, I cannot see

the use of occupying time about what is not—bothering and confusing one thing with another."

"Easy, easy, my good friend," interrupted as jovial and good-tempered "a spark of the Emerald" as any in the hall. "Easy, I say. From the notes Mr. Spencer made on the spot, which our reverend friend the dean has just shown me, I'm thinking it's one of my tenants that's shot, and one that never was a gale behind; and I must have it seen into immediately."

"But, Sir," observed Edward, "what does it matter whose tenant he was—he was a man and a subject."

"A Papist rebel, I'll go bail," interrupted a voice.

"Well, Sir," said Edward, "and if he was, he had as good a right to the protection afforded by the laws of his country as either you or I—he had a right to a fair trial."

"Bathershin!" exclaimed the same rough and thundering voice.

"I do not understand what the gentleman means," observed Edward, with a look of inquiry to the dean, who only smiled.

"What do you mean by calling a tenant of mine a 'Papist rebel,'" said the gentleman who was, with Dean Graves, looking over Mr. Spencer's notes.

"What I say," replied the county colossus, as, striding forward from amid a group who indulged in the bad habit of standing round the fire, or the fire-place, he marched across the room, and looked the querist full in the face. "A Papist rebel, I'll go bail," he repeated; "and as to such a fellow having a right to a fair trial, or a trial of any kind, I deny it in toto. A trial! Cock such a fellow up with a fair trial indeed! If I had my own will and way, I'd soon quiet the country, I'd shoot 'em like so many rats!"

"I dare say you would," observed the person he addressed, and who seemed rather to shrink from coming in contact with one who appeared to Edward half giant, half savage; "but you wouldn't like a good paying tenant of your own to be shot, Mr. O'Driscoll."

"It shall certainly be investigated," repeated Edward; and his quiet, calm, determined tone had a peculiarly clear and impressive sound, following, as it did, the rolling thunder of the giant's brogue, and the sharp clamour of the eager speaking of the past minute. "I ask not concerning any man's faith—"

"Don't ye though?" interrupted the giant. "Bedad, my boy, you've a great deal to learn then."

"I ask not," repeated Edward, looking steadily at O'Driscoll, "concerning any man's faith, but I demand justice; and I will certainly have this (as it seems to me) murder investigated. If you, gentlemen, will assist me, I shall feel obliged; if you will not, I shall certainly go at once to Dublin, and compel an inquiry."

"The devil you will," exclaimed Mr. O'Driscoll, looking over his huge spectacles at Edward, to whom (having entered only

the previous moment) he had not been introduced. Then, speaking loud enough for all to hear, "Who the deuce is he?" he was told, and his ruffled feathers were smoothed in a moment. He advanced towards the young Englishman with his gigantic arms outstretched, seized his unwilling hands within his own, and crushed them in his fervent grasp; slapped him on the back, declaring he was the very cut for a steeple chase, and then demanded how it was that he, who came "from the right sort, and had good wholesome Protestant blood in his veins, should make such a 'bother' about shooting a fellow in such times as the present, when it was needful and necessary to prove the power of the law?"

Edward would have shown that the power of the law was in its justice, but his new acquaintance prevented him.

"Sure, my dear boy," he said, "if ye have a fancy for it, that's enough about it. I'd never gainsay any fancy of one of so fine a family as yours. We'll have the officer, and the dragoons, and all of them in at once, only—it's a quare humour you took in yer head, I must say. Englishmen are mighty quare in such little things. I thought it was some friend of Jack Townsend's who raised the *pullalew*, because the boy was one of his tenants. Faith, I'd be sincerely obleeged to any one who would shoot half-a-dozen of mine in the same way, I know that;"—and he laughed heartily and loudly at his own admission; and then, in as loud a voice, asked the Master of Macroom what they had best "file into" first; whether they'd have Abel up, or take further examinations as to the post-boy affair; or get whatever shine he'd got out of "Pether the Peeler."

"I beg your pardon," said Edward, "for interrupting you, but it struck me that 'Peter the Peeler' was mentioned by one of the people at the cottage as being there at the time."

"Nothing more likely. We'll get the truth out of Peter."

"It will be the first time then, I believe," said the dean.

"Look here, Mr. Spencer, and mind what I'm telling you!" thundered O'Driscoll, "don't mind a word the parson tells you. Only I have such a respect for the Establishment, I'd never enter his church; he's not worth a farthing, he's no spunk in him; he's a *moderate man*—think of that! Sure I once heard him call a priest his christian brother."

Now this did not appear at all monstrous or improper to Edward, though it was followed by a laugh, and a "No, no, no," from many a lip.

"That's what he gets by his English liberalism; think of Father O'Hay being the dean's 'Christian brother!' Oh, Mr. Spencer," he continued, after another roaring laugh at his own words, "if your aunt had heard him say that, I give ye my honour it would have killed her; though the best of the joke is, he did say something—poor dear woman!—almost as bad at her funeral, when he had us all praying for the skirling devils that poured over the hills and did us out of the first earth. It was

a cowardly thing of Richards to fire and run that day! But don't mind the dean, Mr. Spencer—look—I give you my honour, this blessed minute, if he was turned out into the street of Macroom, the mob, that he's always temporising with, would cut him into smithereens; and if it wasn't out of respect for his cloth, we'd cut him up in another way; Sir, he hasn't as strong 'a back' in the country as a field-mouse."

The dean smiled his usual placid smile at this charge, made half in jest, half in earnest, and the Master of Macroom Castle said he was certain Mr. Spencer had never heard of the memorable funeral, and had no idea what was meant by a "strong back."

Two or three gentlemen, whose manners were courtly as courteous, men of polished address and admirable breeding, now suggested to the master of the house that, as Mr. Spencer was a stranger, and seemed very anxious on the subject, it would be as well to inquire at once into what he had that morning witnessed—for that they had much to get through before dinner.

"Ay, do it all before dinner," exclaimed O'Driscoll, rolling himself into a chair, which, substantial as it was, creaked and groaned beneath his weight, "or leave it till to-morrow; one can't be bothered with business after dinner, like a Dublin shop-boy."

In a few minutes the company were arranged in something like form. The master of "the castle"—as the square tower of the once extensive fortification is still termed—sitting on a magisterial-looking chair at the upper end of the table. The usual clerk was absent on business, but a dashing young fox-hunter, smelling of the stable, and habited in a "bang up" and an orange cravat, undertook his office, heading the purposed examinations with a pen-and-ink sketch of a gallows. Before he had time (as he would have said) "to furnish it," "Peter the Peeler," a well-known and bitterly-hated spy, was ushered into the room, the secretary *pro tem.* giving Edward a push in the side with his elbow, followed by the observation that "Now they'd have a regular run."

He was a slight but muscular man; his face, of the regular Cork fashion (so different from the long, narrow, sallow, black-eyed faces of Kerry), had high cheek-bones, sunken eyes—bright, investigating, and hard as gray marbles; projecting brows, receding forehead, a head conveying an idea of remarkable endurance, firmly supported by a red coarse neck; the mouth was wide and projecting, and the nose short, thick, and abruptly terminated. His long frieze coat was thrown back, and in the belt that girdled his waist beneath the "big coat," were a brace of pistols and a cutlass. The glance he cast round the room was sudden, and stealthy as a cat's. It was evident that he at once saw all who were present; the only person he looked at a second time was Edward Spencer.

"Well, Pether, honest boy, how are ye?" said Mr. O'Driscoll,

taking off his spectacles and wiping them on the cuff of his coat, “ how’s every bit of ye that’s in it ? Here’s a strange gentleman, Pether,” and he winked at the company, “ here’s a strange gentleman, Pether, that will be glad of a little help from you in a small matter ; he’s an honourable man, Pether, and won’t want you to *sin your soul*, in any very bad way ; so you’ll let him off *moderately*—eh, Pether ? ”

“ Ah, Mr. O’Driscoll, Sir, you ever and always have your joke ; ye never can let a poor boy like myself alone.”

“ Pether, ye never got your snug little place, nor that big coat, or boots instead of brogues, nor that fine bran new beaver, that his honour of Macroom needn’t be ashamed to wear of a Sunday—by being let alone, Pether ! ”

“ Ah, yer honour’s mighty pleasant, I’ll say that for you,” replied the “ peeler.”

“ Have ye seen any of the ghosts of the boys we sent out for the benefit of their education, Pether ? ”

“ Sorra a one, yer honour.”

“ Now, ‘pon your word,” inquired the young gentleman who had been sketching the gallows, “ did you never see a ghost ? ”

“ Misther John,” said Pether, “ not to be making you an ill answer, I don’t see what business it is of yours whether I did or not. I’m too busy with the living to think much of the dead.”

“ Bravo, Pether, spoken like a man,” persisted Mr. O’Driscoll, who imagined he was doing Mr. Spencer a favour by drawing out the informer, whom, like some others of the party, he used and despised. “ So all that little story of Mary Malloy, whose husband was hung by mistake, was an invention—eh, Pether ? ”

The man’s red complexion instantly sunk into a dusky yellow. He seized, with both his hands, the top rail of a high chair behind which he stood, opened his mouth and gasped at the air convulsively ;—it was like the expiring breathing of a stranded shark, into whose vitals a harpoon had been deeply struck. He raised his hand to his throat, and after a struggle, though the words gurgled and faltered on his white lips, he was heard to say, “ Don’t, Sir, asy—asy wid me, for the love o’ God. I thought, Sir—I *hoped* he was guilty ; and, Sir, sure if he wasn’t—if he wasn’t, gintlemen—there’s many a one sent out of the world innocent, as well as him. Many a one, as you know yerself, Mr. Driscoll, Sir ; and if it was the last word I had to spake”—

“ There—we’ll speak no more about it,” said the master of the castle.

“ Best way ! ” observed Mr. O’Driscoll, putting on his spectacles, apparently without noticing the emotion of the wretched man, “ there’s no use in crying after spilt milk, is there, Pether ? ”

“ It was blood, Sir—*SPILT BLOOD*—woman and childre’ too ! I beg your honour’s pardon,” continued the man, addressing the master, “ but would you order me a glass of whiskey ; there’s something gripping me throat, and it’s only the whiskey washes it down.”

He eagerly drank off the liquid poison, that was speedily procured, and then bowing respectfully to Edward, inquired in a changed tone, "What he could have the pleasure to do for his honour?"

The master of the house having looked over the few notes that Edward had made in the morning, asked Peter if he had been out with the military.

"I was."

"And where did you take them?"

"Not very far. We went out about two in the morning, for a rason I had, that one who knew about the post-boy was in a place near Kilcrea."

"And did you find him?"

"We did not."

"Any trace?"

"Sorra a trace, except a pair of big brogues in the house, and the marks of the bare feet that fitted them in the bog at the back of the pigsty."

"Did you follow the track?"

"As far as it would go. They said in the house they were all down with the faver, and the soldiers, who fear the sickness more than powder or shot, wouldn't turn into it."

"And what then, Pether?" interrogated Mr. O'Driscoll, who kept swaying about until he impelled his chair close to the table, upon which he rested his elbows, "What then? you're not one to take the soldiers out for nothing."

"It discourages them, Sir, if one takes them out for no good," he answered, "and so we went hunting afther arrms."

"Did you find any?"

"Troth we did, in a barn, under the thrashing floor. We got a fowling-piece and two horse-pistols at Jem M'Swiney's, close to Inchira Hill—Crookstown they call it now—and from what I hear there was more of the same sort thrown into 'the Bride.' I wouldn't go bail but some of the arrms taken out of Mr. Townsend's house had a dip in that purty strame, and are lying there still."

"Had you any disturbance with the people at M'Swiney's?"

"No; there war no men it, at all, Sir, only the women and childre'; and they all swore they knew nothing about the arrms, or any thing else. They war all bad in the faver too. One girl said some strangers laid the arrms there when the ould man drove his pigs to Cork—you never can get the truth out of them. The arrms are outside, your honour."

"Very good, Pether. Then what road did you come home?"

"What road? by Coolomer; where I had good rason to think I'd light upon another bird's nest."

"In whose little place?" demanded the gentleman who was annoyed at his tenants being molested.

"In Ignatius Doyle's, plase yer honour."

"I thought, Peter," said the gentleman, advancing, "I gave

you fair warning before, not to meddle or make with any of my tenants?"

"You did so, your honour; but it wasn't only the thrifle of arrms—I had good rason to believe that Doyle was one of the first and foremost in the burning below Macroom, at Mr. Richards'; and it's well known that some of the boys who was at that, have papers that, if we could only get hoult of, would let us into the rights of who in and who out through the whole countrhy. It's well known to your honours that the head and strength of the Whiteboys isn't in the poor cabin-keepers and mountain-runners—not it indeed! Ignatius is a well-larned boy, and has a first-cousin housemaid at Spencer Court, and another travelling the world as child's maid with a lady; in troth, there's some brother, or sister, or cousin of Igg Doyle's in every Protestant house in the country. Igg is mighty well larned."

"*Was*, you mean, for he is dead!" said the landlord, looking steadily at Peter.

"Musha! yer honour don't say so," answered Peter, with a well-feigned look of astonishment. "They war scrimigen widin the little place, himself and two of the solegers, and I had no mind to go in."

"I suppose," said the landlord of the unfortunate Ignatius, "*you* were afraid of the fever then."

"Musha! then God knows I was not. I went in with the sergeant first, and Igg was laying on the bed—a wet praskeen about his head—and I pointed him out, and his wife began schreeming and roaring, and swore he was dying; and they lifted him on to the flure, and searched the house, and never a skreed or scrap of anything, written or plain, could they find; and then he began aggravating the soldiers, and I come out—and so—that's all I know about it."

"And you heard no screams, no entreaties for mercy?" said Mr. Spencer, in a tone of inquiry.

"Oh, bedad, Sir! wherever there's a soldier I'm sure to hear the screams. They'd as soon see a fire enter the house as a soldier."

"You remember this," persisted the gentleman; "you entered my tenant's house, you find him ill in bed—"

"I beg your pardon, Sir—but it's my thinking he was wounded in some of the night skirmishes," said the informer.

"No doubt! and died of his wound while you and the soldiers were there. I'm quite up to you, you see."

"Oh, Sir, I've nothing to do with it. I can show my employers part of the information I received. I did my duty in taking the militairy there, and am not accountable for anything that tuck place betwixt them. I've seen half-a-dozen men shot of a morning, without such a bother about the blaguards."

The latter part of his explanation was given in a tone of testy insolence, that provoked a reproof from the presiding magistrate—a sharp and keen reproof, which had an admirable effect upon the party, who saw that "the Master" was in earnest: and when this

was the case, no one chose to trifle. Even Mr. O'Driscoll's huge Momus-like countenance assumed a steady and thoughtful aspect ; and the clerk *pro tem.* mended his pen and wrote vigorously. The landlord and Mr. Spencer (to whom much courtesy was shown) agreed that the soldiers should be examined, and Peter was ordered into a separate room while the examination proceeded. They failed, however, in making out a case against the men. They all declared that the man was dying when they entered ; that they only used "necessary violence" towards those who endeavoured to prevent their searching the cabin, and removing Doyle from where they imagined, from his clinging to the spot, papers or arms were concealed ; that a pistol went off in the struggle, but with no intent on their part to fire. And Mr. O'Driscoll, and several other warm supporters of the principle that

"They shall keep who have the power,"

seemed to think it a most wonderful and praiseworthy outstretching of the hands of Justice towards her sister Mercy, that the commanding officer was bound to be answerable for the appearance of his men, *if* any proceedings were instituted against them by the relatives of the late Ignatius Doyle.

Edward was marvellously perplexed and pained. He felt that "Irish justice" and "justice to the Irish" meant not one and the same thing. He had seldom, perhaps never, been in an assembly of finer specimens of his fellow-men ; there was a frankness, a spirit, a boisterous joyousness about them, that, under other circumstances, would have stirred his spirit, and warmed his very heart ; but without, were a starving and disaffected multitude—a multitude of creatures by nature as frank, as joyous, and as brilliant as those who (with half-a-dozen exceptions out of twenty or thirty) seemed to care nothing for their sufferings or crimes, beyond the effect such sufferings and such crimes might produce upon themselves. Edward was fond of weighing and comparing, and was more prone to pause and think than to act. "If these," he thought, "are the gentlemen of the county, I do not know how I shall get on—at least with them all." And then he remembered they were seen under peculiar circumstances of excitement ; he recalled with pleasure what he had heard "the master" say, and began to appreciate the "wild" high breeding even of "the clerk." Again, he thought for an instant how unfortunate that such men were nursed in prejudice, and fed with the poisoned food of party ; and when his eyes met those of the good clergyman, in one look his spirit drank in so much of Christian love and charity, that he recalled the moonlit deck, the soothing sound of the billows, and the words of the good man entreating him to patience and forbearance. It would seem that youth and age perfectly understood each other ; there was between these two a sympathy so great, that without the disturbance of words they interpreted each other's thoughts—they believed each in the other's truth, uprightness, and honour ! It was by an instinctive

faith that this feeling pervaded their minds; and let no one disbelieve in such sympathy of honourable souls—this welling forth of the heart's confidence—this trusting—blessed to give, blessed to receive! Let no cold sceptic in human faith and human goodness turn suspiciously away from the open, honest trusting the true heart feels for heart as true, although experience may not have been yet brought to test it. There are some in this wide world whom it is a downright heresy to doubt; there are others, from whom all kindly instincts turn loathingly away. Cheered and calmed by the kind looks of his reverend friend, Edward was disturbed by the announcement, that it would now be well to take the depositions of Mr. Richards.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MIDDLEMAN A WITNESS.

ABEL RICHARDS was possessed of considerable dramatic talent. He dressed to admiration whatever he wished to appear; and though his strong and evil passions frequently disturbed the calm and stolid expression of his countenance, yet its Mawworm look, when he entered the well-filled room at Maerroom Castle, was perfection itself. His hands were folded, his head was bent, his eyes were half-closed; his was the martyr aspect of one who, during the past week, had submitted to the scourge and the cord, and sundry beatings of the breast, and resolved to carry his stripes into society, and descent upon them as people do upon good fortune.

And here again was another reading of a national character—the national character of a versatile people—so versatile, as to require being long known to be at all understood—more consistent to inconsistency than to aught else; and yet more steadfast, more enduring to their great points of faith, than any nation upon earth.

Some of the gentlemen, too proud to recognise the middleman save as a necessary whipper-up of acres and tenants, nodded to him encouragingly, and such salutations he returned most respectfully, for they were made by “the first men in the county.” Others, believing that he was what he desired to be considered—the victim of a persecution arising from his change of faith—advanced kindly, but still with an air of superiority, and shook him by the hand. In return for these salutations he muttered a few sentences, of which Mr. Spencer could only hear the words, “brand from the burning,”—“highly favoured”—“merciful providence”—“humble martyr”—“deep gratitude”—“christian fortitude”—“butcherly papists.” Others again, of whom Mr. O'Driscoll was the leader, threw at the man a sort of tallyhoing welcome, which resembled the salutation of a pack of young hounds to an old fox from whom they expect “sport,” and whose escape they are consequently determined to prevent. This greeting

he accepted with a hideous attempt at an enduring smile, but met the eye of the dean in a far different manner as he extricated his hand from the pressure of Mr. O'Driscoll's, who had the usual county propensity for dislocating fingers with an hospitable shake. His hesitation of manner—not exactly knowing whether to advance or retreat—betrayed that he felt his equivocal position more deeply than might have been supposed.

"I am very glad, Mr. Richards, you were preserved," said the clergyman, advancing towards him, "it was a great mercy—one not to be forgotten."

"Never, Sir, never!" he replied, "never to be forgotten. Ah, Mr. Spencer, Sir, your lot is cast in troublous times; you remember my warning, Sir, in Cork, when I had the holy happiness of laying my little tributes before you. Ah, Sir! I did not then think how nearly I was being made a brand for the burning—but the hand, THE HAND was outstretched! If an accident, which I thought in the blindness of my carnal nature was injurious to my worldly interests, and disturbed my poor narrow plans, had not occurred, and detained me—and that too, privately, at Inchegeela, I should have been in my own home. I came upon it when it was consuming, and mercifully, Sir, found shelter beneath the roof of Spencer Court."

"Come tell us all, Aby—how was it?" inquired Mr. O'Driscoll, "did you pass through the scoundrels?"

"No, Sir, I give thanks, not through them, I skirted them; I heard the moans of the perishing animals; I heard the taunts, and the jibes, and the insults they addressed to me; I even looked in the faces of some who gazed only on the fire, and—whom—I can identify."

"Oh, to be sure, you can!" interrupted the ever jovial O'Driscoll. "I hope some of my devilish bad tenants were among them. Now, 'pon your honour, weren't some of my Skibbereen boys, who never pay a farthing, and whom I daren't eject, in the thick of it? Look! I'll give you as fine a mare as any in the county equal to sixteen stone—ten pound better than the gray seventeen hand ould stager that's burnt—if you'll put into the black list three names that I'll give you. And, Aby, it will be a national benefit—it will be a blessing to the country to be rid of them; it will stand against all the lies—I mean all the truths you tould these six months."

"Oh, Sir, may the Lord forgive you!" replied Richards, casting up his eyes, "but you are only in jest, Sir, nothing more; yet it's awful jesting—it's awful, Sir, uncommon awful, under the circumstances. Those I can identify I will identify, that's all; though sooner or later I shall be the sufferer—I know that. But I have been—"

"A brand plucked from the burning, isn't that it?" laughed O'Driscoll. "I'm sure you must have been a pile of brands, for I have heard you brand yourself after this fashion fifty times a year at least!"

"Pleasant, Sir, always pleasant! You have much to be thankful for in that charming flow of spirits. Mighty pleasant," muttered Mr. Richards.

"But here's Mr. Spencer, dying to know how it chanced that you ran to earth at Spencer Court,"

"I should be glad, indeed, to hear it," said Edward; "but did not like to intrude my inquiries when I understood Mr. Richards had to make depositions."

"Faith, that's not bad—that just chimes in with the master—who looks pistols and bullets at me, whenever I disturb the gravity of an investigation. We manage in Ireland to mingle law and love, and jest and murder, abduction and reduction, whiskey and pistols, courtship and matrimony, wit and starvation, most lovingly together. There's a spice, a zest, a flow; a running fire of all things—in and out, round and about us—a flashing and a splashing—that you never find anywhere else; everywhere we mingle all things."

"Not quite," said Edward, "there are some things, which in all other countries are mingled, yet here, I perceive, are as distinct as the waters of the arrowy Rhone and Geneva's Lake. You do not mingle your religions or your politics."

"No, no! We do not want to mingle them," was the reply; they were the only serious, earnest words Mr. O'Driscoll had spoken.

The single sentence uttered by Edward Spencer, produced a sensation throughout the room, of which he was perfectly unconscious; but the dean well knew that from those few true words, much scandal would arise, and much doubt be excited as to the real state of the young Englishman's opinions. There was, however, no time for speculation or thought upon any topic—partly from a desire to get the business over, and partly from a knowledge of the minuteness of the straws over which Irish society so frequently stumbles.

The master set to in good earnest with Mr. Richards, who commenced his narrative in a low tone of vulgar cant; but as he warmed to his subject, hinting occasionally at his "past persecutions," and his different suspicions and hatreds of various persons, he came out in his real character; dark, cunning, determined, cloaking his vengeful feelings beneath the guise of justice; stating the reasons why he thought such and such persons were deep in the disturbances; until, while his brows gathered into a storm-cloud, and his closed lips—and hands clenched with the cruellest determination—proving the deadly nature of his feelings—he denounced Lawrence Macarthy as the great fire-brand—the arch conspirator—the chiefest amongst them all. He stated his firm belief that Lawrence was *the one*, the invisible, Captain Rock;—the unseen, unknown agent, principal mover—every thing, in fact. Nerved into strength of declamation by his bitterness towards the young man, whom he himself had nearly murdered, he continued to pour forth his

violence, until, forgetful of his assumed character, he sealed all with an oath, so deep and dreadful, that some, albeit not over scrupulous in asseverations, shuddered, while the laughing colossus, extending his heavy arm across the table, shouted,

“Capital!—thank you for that, Aby;—there you were yourself, my fine fellow! Never turn the whites of your eyes again on me for my light oaths, which are as gossamer to this! Why, what a revengeful reprobate you are! The old leaven—the old leaven, that’s it, isn’t it? I say, you must turn monk; there is nothing but the round dozens and hard work at Cougane-barra, or Rome itself, to rub out such blackness! That *was* an oath! Swear it again, Aby, I’ll give ye ten pounds if you’ll only swear it again!”

But Richards did “turn the whites of his eyes,” and clasp his hands, and mutter about the “weakness of the flesh,”—going so far as to hint that he wished to retire for the soothing comfort of private prayer. And then, recalled to his real nature by a question from Dean Graves, he answered that as the country had been under martial law for some time, there had been no difficulty in searching the old owl’s castle in which the young MacCarthy lived, among the mountains, and that nothing had been found there, except indeed the sash and epaulette of a British officer, and a couple of handkerchiefs, not marked either with the MacCarthy initials or MacCarthy crest, which the old Madam MacCarthy was so fond of putting on everything.

An officer, who was present, expressed his firm belief that the Whiteboys, during the past year, had been subjected to a much more strict discipline—a well organised military tutelage—than had ever directed them before; and added that this conviction led him strongly to doubt Mr. Richards’ statement, that MacCarthy was their leader-in-chief—a young, impetuous man, utterly ignorant of the great principles of military movements, who at the very best, could only carry on in his own person a guerilla or brigand sort of warfare, shooting from behind a crag, or surprising, in an untenable position, a party weaker than his own. It was, he continued, known that an officer, connected with an old family, had altogether disappeared some months, perhaps more than a year ago; and circumstances led more than one person at the war-office to believe that his wild nature had found home and employment amongst the disturbers of Munster.

Still Abel maintained his point. Lawrence MacCarthy was nowhere to be found; “he had ‘good reasons,’ ” he said, “for knowing that he was right.” In the crowd about his house, he only recognised the face of one man, Ignatius Doyle (this created a sensation, as he had not heard the Peeler’s evidence), the voices of several others (he gave their names); but he had proof, certain as life or death, that Lawrence MacCarthy was the chief causer of the destruction that fell upon his property, and that papers of the utmost importance had been in his possession.

“He knew,” he said,—“at least, he *had seen them* pass from MacCarthy’s hands into the hands of another person.”

“Who was that person?”

He looked fixedly at the dean for a minute, and then glanced at Edward Spencer.

“It was a person—a woman—a girl—in fact a young lady; he did not know if it would be agreeable to Mr. Spencer to have it spoken of, but she was generally considered a relative or connexion of Mr. Spencer’s; he *saw* them transferred from the hands of Lawrence Macarthy into those of Ellen Macdonnel.” Upon this statement, both the dean and Mr. Spencer rose.

“It has so happened,” said the young Englishman, “that I have never seen my kinswoman, Miss Macdonnel; nor did I till this moment consider what has suddenly occurred to me, that the Macarthy of whom you spoke is unfortunately her half-brother; but from all I have heard, from all I believe of this young lady, she is perfectly incapable of acting in concert with any one opposed to her faith or her allegiance. I shall see her within a few hours, and am assured I shall be able to prove to the Master of Macroom Castle and the present company, that Mr. Richards is labouring under an illusion.”

“I am very certain, Sir, that you will not see the young lady,” said Richards, decidedly, “within a few hours; that is, if you expect to see her at Spence Court—she was not there this morning.”

“May I ask how you came to be so informed?” inquired Mr. Spencer.

“The house was searched for her and the papers,” was the reply.

“And did you dare, had you the audacity to institute a search of my house, under the idea that my relative concealed illegal papers therein?” said Mr. Spencer, his cheeks flushing, his eyes sparkling, his slight graceful figure expanding with indignation.

Several of the gentlemen rose; O’Driscoll shouted a “Bravo!” that shook the ceiling, and “the Master” called “Order;” it was faintly though, very faintly, for there was no one in the room who more sincerely appreciated the spirited bearing of the Englishman. Several of the young men clapped their hands, and then whispered each other in dismal tones, that it was no use—Richards hadn’t the “pluck” to draw a trigger. It promised to be a jest to these youngsters, but it was earnest to Edward. “If,” he added, “you imagine you can fasten this slander upon a lady, you are mistaken; I am the representative of her nearest kin; and as such, feel it my duty to protect her.”

“I must confess,” said the Master, “it seems to me strange that Mr. Richards should distinctly state that Lawrence Macarthy was the chief agent in the destruction of his house; that he, in point of fact, meditated his murder: and yet, that he *saw* him place papers of such importance in the hands of Miss Macdonnel.”

“Ay, riddle us that. What were you doing, my Aby, when the young rebel gave his sister the papers?” inquired Mr. O’Driscoll.

“I—I,” stammered Abel Richards, “I—I was looking on, and praying to the Lord!”

The dean cast upon him a look of withering indignation, it could hardly have been believed that so gentle and benevolent a face could have given expression to such deep scorn at the man’s hypocrisy.

“Poaching on my friend Pether’s ground—spying—? eh, my Aby? Was it through the architecture of a turf rick you looked, or out of a potato pit, or with yer eye stuck in a crevice? You had always a sort of second sight, and could see what no one else could, I’ll say that for you.”

“A truce to this,” interrupted the Master. “Mr. Richards must inform us how he came to witness this extraordinary transfer.”

Very unwillingly, and with sundry *détours* from the truth was the statement made. “How, escaping from the brightness of the flames that would have betrayed him, he forded the river and found himself in a state of extreme exhaustion and dismay beneath the shadow of Spencer Court; that, knowing the evil inclinations of all therein towards him, he dared not enter; that he crept to where the moon threw the shadows darkest, but discovered that every point except the one where he had crossed was guarded, as the Whiteboys had posted scouts to prevent escape at each corner of the building; he had seen two whispering within a yard of where he stood, and that had he not crouched into a recess caused by a projecting buttress he would have been discovered; that, observing a light in Miss Ellen’s window, inspired by a sudden hope, he entered and entreated her protection.”

“And received it, I am sure,” said the dean, “though you must confess that of all men living, you had the least reason to do so.”

“She concealed me,” he replied, drawing a long breath, “and I hardly know who came or who went, (though, craving Mr. Spencer’s pardon, every inmate of his house, as I discovered that night, is a fire-brand).”

“Permit me, Sir, again to doubt you,” said the excited Edward. “They are the same who served my uncle faithfully for a number of years. You will have the goodness to remember, gentlemen, that Miss Macdonnel gave this person the protection he desired, though, if I understand Dean Graves aright, he is personally offensive to her.”

“She certainly stowed me into a cupboard,” said the caitiff, “where had there not been a providential opening for breathing I must have been suffocated. I prayed fervently, and her fierce dog put me in bodily and continual terror of my life; my clothes were dripping wet, and I had no creature-comfort of any kind.”

“Except protection, Sir, the protection of your life,” observed “the Master.”

The traitor looked embarrassed, but regaining his self-possession, continued: “Presently, Sir, the window shook as with a sudden

thunderbolt, and Lawrence Macarthy covered with blood entered, he was moreover *disguised*, had taken more stimulant than was good for soul or body, and she told him so. She made every effort to get him out of the room, for she did not wish me to hear his words."

Edward, who had resumed his seat, rose, and requesting the chairman's pardon, begged to observe that he did not think Mr. Richards had any right to allude to what Miss Macdonnel *thought*, which he could not possibly understand, that he was very certain she could never (supposing Mr. Richards' statement to be true) have believed that any human being would have been so base as to owe his life to her, and then inform as to what passed in the sanctuary wherein that life was saved.

Richards also rose, and, bowing round the circle, appealed to them, whether a sense of "public duty" should not compel a man to a task which else would be beyond all endurance; adding, he would sooner have died than implicate a lady; and then he stammered and hesitated, receiving no returning smiles, until the "Go on, Sir," of the chairman forced him back, when he briefly related what is already known to us. He made the case as violent and as bad against Lawrence Macarthy as he possibly could, for the evident purpose of exculpating himself as much as possible, by showing a necessity for his treachery; he pictured his own individual agony, his "wrestling with himself," his burning desire when he saw the papers marked with the life-blood of so many whom he loved, to wrest them from the Whiteboy's hand; but then "the weakness of the flesh" restrained him. He even related with fiend-like joy Lawrence's determination to speak loud when his sister entreated him to speak low; and he told this without one remembrance of a grateful nature towards her, who, rather than violate the laws of hospitality, or break a promise she had given, risked her own destruction, and the destruction of one dearer to her than herself. The generosity of Ellen Macdonnel had been thrown away upon a soulless hypocrite; and to add to her exceeding merit, she knew that it would be so. He told also that Lawrence "fatigued with bloodshed—slept; that he felt as if the sword of Judith had been committed into his hands: he could have bound him then—but—"

"But what restrained you?" inquired the Master.

"The Lord's time was not accomplished," whined Abel Richards, "and his sister placed his rifle across her lap—and her eyes upon where I lay—and her dog watched with her."

"My poor, poor Ellen!" murmured the dean, "what she must have endured if only a tithe of this be true!"

"I give you my honour," said O'Driscoll, "it's mighty quare; let's get to the end, and then I'll tell you my mind, my Aby."

"The end cometh," quoth the man; "Lawrence awoke, and went his way in peace; and not long had he been gone, sauntering—as he always does—as if intent on nothing but innocent diversions after birds or rabbits, when I heard the roll of a distant

drum, and sundry shots, and my heart awoke, and I could have shouted 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon,' but I refrained, and slid me down from the window, and found the military; and the kindness of my nature restrained my tongue, so that at first I said no word of Spencer Court."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the officer who had before spoken; "but I think, if I mistake not what I heard this morning, that you would immediately have returned there, but that knowing it was the residence of an English Protestant gentleman it was some time before you could make the necessary affidavit to warrant a search."

"Ah! perhaps so," said the pliant Abel; "my poor head wanders—the delay was fatal—the young lady and the papers disappeared. I think, Sir," to Mr. O'Driscoll, "you were so kind as to say you would give me the advantage of your opinion."

"Ay, that I will," said the colossus, "and I only wish that my heart was round your neck this minute, for it's as heavy as a mill-stone."

An instant "buzz" went round the room. The extraordinary elocution of the uneducated but well-born "Munster giant" was generally followed by shouts of laughter. But there were times when no one dared laugh at what he said, however strange might be his words. The fire of his eyes—the iron-like clenching of his fists—his well-known violence—restrained the brave, thoughtless, and reckless fox-hunters of Cork and Kerry. After he had expressed this extraordinary wish, from which Abel shrank, he slowly unbuttoned the old-fashioned cuffs of his coat, and turned them back, so that his bony wrists and the cord-like veins of his hands were fully exposed. He then seized the collar of his coat, and, as it were, shook himself into it. He was positively agitated, trembled, and then drawing himself up, he prepared to speak, amid silence rendered breathless by these strange preparations.

"There's none of you gentlemen here but know my principles. I'd carry fire and sword—battle—blood—murder, and sudden death through the country—for the sake of my principles. I'm Saxon to the backbone, barring my name; and yet I am as proud of my name as I am of my principles. I'm no great speaker, and would rather any day knock a man down than argue with him. But there are some things I must speak. I knew that girl's mother," he paused—he thrust his forefinger into the ample folds of his cravat, the muslin rent at once, and the swelling of his throat, now completely exposed, proved that some violent emotion was raging within him—"I knew Annie Cumming," and his voice sank while he added, "I never forgot her. I've checked my horse in many a day's coursing, when *she* was dead and gone, to listen to the wild singing of her child, or to see her bright smile as she'd canter along the mountain road, to my friend the dean's over there. I've looked in her face as she grew towards womanhood, until I dreamt her mother was before me. I've watched her charities, and blessed her for them, though she

did them to Papists. Gentlemen, you who know my principles, will understand how I feel to have Annie Cumming's child set by such a wolf as *that*. Now easy, boys, and stand from about me, to give me breath."

"I am certain," said Edward Spencer, "that it is a fabrication from first to last."

"No—no!" exclaimed half-a-dozen, and one continued, unmindful of his blunder, "Lawrence Macarthy is well known—rebel blood has run in his veins *three hundred years!*"

"It's not *that*," resumed Mr. O'Driscoll; "I don't care if his head was over the court-house to-night, before to-morrow, just for his father's sake; but haven't you the hearts of Irishmen in your bosoms, to feel what ~~she~~ did? Why, that young Irish maiden performed a deed of honour which you can't match in your college books. I see it all; every soul in that house would have sent ~~HIM~~, crouching there, to blazes, if she had but raised her finger towards his hiding-hole. Yet she preferred endangering her own and her brother's life to a breach of hospitality, or a forfeiture of her word. Glory! is there no shout in yer throats for such a girl as *that*?"

The electric spark kindled, and in that very room a wild hurrah and a clapping of hands was raised for her—so loud as to be heard by the people outside the gate. It was a burst of national generosity and gallantry sweeping away all petty feeling for the moment; it was the generous impulse of generous nature. The Master of Macroom called "Order—order," while he wiped his eyes, and vehemently reproved the temporary clerk, who had shouted louder than any, and who, caught in the irreverent fact, sat down to plunge his pen in the ink with greater diligence than ever.

"Afther that," said O'Driscoll, quite comforted and calmed by an ebullition of feeling which might have caused the walls of a modern mansion to tremble as with an earthquake; "Afther that, I'll tell Aby Richards what I think of him."

"I think," he began, "I think," he said again, but his eyes sought the man in vain; Richards had taken advantage of the momentary tumult to slip out of the room, not caring to wait for the promised "opinion."

One shouted, "broke cover," another, "stole away;" but when the door was opened by those who resolved to hunt him, so decided a smell of roast meats and savoury dishes entered, that an universal feeling prevailed, that a good day's work had been accomplished, and they could determine what steps should be taken to bring to justice those who were really implicated, and also for the discovery of the papers—after dinner. The dean volunteered to find Ellen Macdonnel; and many expressed a conviction that they should be able to hit upon a means of enforcing subjection, and tranquillising the country before the next morning; while others—old, thinking men, shook their heads, and sighed.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE PREPARATIONS.

A DINNER of any kind, but an Irish dinner in particular, is at open war with thought; and as the claret and whiskey-punch circulated freely, and each man was expected, if not obliged, to fill his glass, there was little time for reflection. Edward greatly wished to arrive at Spencer Court, but found his "leaving" would have been considered a direct insult to the most hospitable house in Munster. Dean Graves told him, that his presence there might be useful; and when those who had doubted the young Englishman's "principles," saw him toss off a bumper to "the glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great and good King William," they were convinced that he was "one of them." Thus was he unconsciously pledged to the two opposing parties; at Blarney he had drunk a toast he did not understand; and at Macroom he was not aware that drinking the health of a cool-headed ruler, a great—if not a good—man, could be anything beyond a tribute to a memory which excited his admiration without inducing his sympathy. The evening waned on; toasts were proposed and songs were sung. One, which Mr. O'Driscoll gave in a full rich tenor, and which filled the room with "a pleasing melody," was called for twice; it commenced as follows:

"Oh, what is Dan Macarthy, or what is old Jim Nash?  
Or all who ere in punch drinking by luck have cut a dash;  
Compared to that choice hero, whose praise my rhymes perfume;  
I mean the boast of Erin's Isle, Bould Barry of Macroom."

Barry's great excellence lay in drinking more whiskey-punch than any of his friends; and the humour (dull enough), in directing his wife, when he retired to rest, to "mix him" a gallon jug of punch to moisten his lips—as people in modern times, call for a bottle of soda-water. Edward had no taste for the sentiment; and seeing that the dean, and several who seemed the most steady of the company had withdrawn; that at last "the Master" himself, pleading urgent business, and promising a "quick return," had absented himself; and that those who remained were drawing more closely round the table, dismissing claret as "too slow," and calling for "*screeching*," hot water, and fresh tumblers—he also contrived to escape, and half opened the door of the room they had occupied in the morning: but seeing "the Master" and several strangers there in earnest conversation, he closed it; not however before he had caught sight of Abel Richards, more erect than usual, which he thought boded no good to the cause of either justice or mercy. New as he was to the country, his impulse was to request per-

mission to enter ; and he would have done so, had he not observed that the dean was one of those who was grouped around the mysterious circle. Twice he put his hand on the handle, but his national reserve forbade it ; and at last he inquired of a servant “ if there was another sitting-room.”

The man looked somewhat offended. “ To be sure there is, yer honour, plenty of sitting, and sleeping rooms too—only when we have *all the county here*, we make bould to put up a few beds, shake downs, or any little convanyinces that way, for the quality. Oh, bedad ! it’s in Macroom Castle, long life to his honour ! that there is full and plenty of sitting-rooms, Sir—only these two, laid out for sitting in, just now, Sir, for the rasons I have explained to your honour ! God bless you, Sir, though the castle is big enough for a troop of horse, we’ve every bed in the town taken for our company, borrowed or bought, yet a quarter of the gentlemen, the young pleasant ones, won’t look for a bed at all—find one under the table, or out on the grass—and then a dip in the river, and they’re up to anything.”

“ You must be very tired,” observed the young Englishman, moved by the memory of the grumblings and black looks of the servants in Berkshire, that succeeded a ball or a hunting breakfast.

“ Oh, Lord, no, Sir,” answered the broad, grinning Munster face. “ Oh, Lord, no, Sir ! the poor master do be tired sometimes—and more’s the pity ; but no such place in the county as this, Sir, for man or beast, or divarshin—full and plenty ; and if we die in the service, lashings of pipes and tobacco at the wake, and his honour’s self lading the head to the grave ! No wonder we’d lay down our life for him—the Lord make his bed in Heaven, I pray on my bended knees day and night ! and good rason I have, me and all belonging to me, living under his honour these two hundred years and more. And it’s himself that’s the *moral* of a good landlord. There isn’t a gentleman in all Ireland that might not take pattern by him ; and indeed, Sir, I’d be sorry you, or any strange gentleman like you, could be led to think that such landlords as Mr. Richards are the run of the county—they’re as Master Matt, your honour’s own schoolmaster, says, *the exception not the rule*. And it’s true for him—the best landlords, as a body may say, have the blood and bone of the country in them.”

“ I am glad to hear one of your class stand up so bravely for the landlords,” said Edward ; “ very glad.”

“ There are good landlords all through Ireland,” continued the man ; “ and I’ve travelled a great deal in my own country, as well as in England, with the Master, and known many fine, good gentlemen, who keep at home—God bless them for it !—and hear and see with their own ears and eyes ; but, Sir, the way of it is, *that one bad man makes more noise in the world than twenty good ones* ; and when once a cry begins, all take hold of it, and shout it on. Why the Master here is like a king among ‘em. Never

a bolt was ever drawn on the castle since I was born, or my father before me; and he has the hearts of every one of us in his hand, to throw or toss about as he likes. And why not? *Doesn't he deserve them?* Never distrained upon a poor man yet—never increased the hardship it was the will of God to visit on a widow, or a fatherless child—never asked whether a boy, like myself, went to mass or church on a Sunday, as long as we did go, and kept the day quiet and holy; only if any suspicion was out against us, send for the priest, and inquire into it—and friendly he has always been with his reverence, a rare priest, whose vestments were made in the foreign countries where he got his learning. Oh, sure if there wasn't good landlords in it, Ireland couldn't have held out so long—the middlemen are the worst, that have no stake in the country, only make all for themselves—and those that never look on us can't love us."

"You are not in a very loveable state, just now," said Mr. Spencer, half smiling.

"God knows that's a true word for a stranger; but it never holds on long, Sir. We'll be asy enough soon—some of us too asy."

"Suppose," said Mr. Spencer, "that your Master was to distrain upon a man who would not pay."

"Every poor fellow pays the Master that can. His land is not let more than half up to its value, so that they make their own of it. Well, nothing hinders the paying of his honour's rents but the sickness, or if the tenant gets into any of the troubles that do be running through the country."

"Well, suppose he distrained under these circumstances?"

"But he would not, Sir. Sure I told your honour he was one of the good landlords; and did any one ever hear of a good landlord distraining upon a poor creature because he had no power to pay, and turning him on the cold stones of the world's high road for what was his misfortune?"

"Certainly not. But suppose a tenant would not pay, although he could."

"It's impossible, Sir," was the only reply Edward could elicit.

"Then I am to believe, that if arrears of rent are due, the Master——"

"Forgives the whole of it—that's just it, Sir, the easiest and the pleasantest way, and helps them on a bit," interrupted the servant. "But there's some not as well liked as the Master, and yet far superior to Mr. Richards, who's not his way inclined; and if they don't get their rent, why they talk very hard about it, and won't listen to reason."

"And what follows?"

"Why they talk again, and threaten hard entirely."

"And what then?"

"Oh, bedad, I don't know, Sir. They keep on at the threatening; and are mighty exact not to let the debt increase, and the like of that."

“ Well ? ”

“ Well, Sir, they threaten mighty hard entirely ; but if they’ve any mind to remain in the country, just to be easy and comfortable, *they don’t do any thing more than that.*”

“ I understand,” said Edward.

“ Of course an honourable gentleman like yourself would understand it. And think how cruel it is to be drove from the only thing that keeps life and soul together—the bit of land ! Ah, yer honour ! if all gentlemen were like the Master and the other good landlords, it’s quiet enough the country would be ; only one or two bad ones upset the whole place—and a hard name sticks to many that don’t deserve it. And God bless you too, Sir,” he added—while finding his hat for Edward, who said he would take a stroll in the moonlight—“ your servants say you’re a noble master. It was mighty lucky yer getting rid of them English, Sir, in Ccrk ; didn’t understand the country, Sir. I ask yer honour’s pardon,” he continued, following Edward to the door, “ but if ye turn that way, ye’ll see a raal Irish jig danced : there’s a piper in the barn divartin’ the servants and followers with the music.”

“ Dancing ! ” exclaimed Edward, “ and the country under martial law, and the town full of troops, and all disturbance.”

“ Oh, Sir,” answered the man, as he brushed the hat with the cuff of his coat, “ sure if we waited till the country was quiet, Sir, we’d forget the sound of the pipes and every step we had in the world long ago.”

Macroom Castle is any thing but a handsome or picturesque castle. Patched and added to, at different periods, weather-slanted in some places, and overgrown with ivy in others, it has a certain air of Irish negligence, Irish strength and Irish mismanagement about it, similar to that which, with few exceptions, is apparent to strangers in most of the still inhabited dwellings of its class. The moon shone full upon the square massive building, and the lights within gleaming and sparkling from amid the deep green shining ivy, or out of the blue slates, had a strange appearance to Edward Spencer ; particularly when, directed by the rippling of the Sullane to its banks overhung with noble trees, he looked back and viewed the castle through the boughs and foliage of the “ Wilderness.” At intervals the breeze bore the festive sound of the “ union pipes,” to which the thoughtless servants and retainers were dancing in one of the out-offices ; while through the open windows of the banqueting-hall came the song—only half articulate—the wild shout at some favourite toast, and the wilder laughter. There was no sound from the town—except once, when the blast of a bugle caused several windows to be thrown open, and questions asked ; Edward was certain they were questions from their tone, but he could hear no words.

The river was running calmly at his feet ; catching occasionally the reflection of a distant light, and murmuring, as it passed, to the reeds and sedges that impeded its progress. The shadows of

the moon are as capricious as a maiden's first smiles of love ; now all light, anon all darkness—blackness, in truth, at times ; then coming out more blandly and sweetly than ever, full of gracious and gentle loveliness—and even the more prized for their uncertainty. Lovers have written sonnets to her midnight majesty time out of mind, and before then, Edward Spencer had perpetrated verse, believing Mary the most poetical of all names—the *sound* of all dearest to his ear : no music was ever so sweet to him as the music of that gentle name. And yet the Mary of his affections was not so very gentle ; the vigour and earnestness of her nature had more of the spirit of the eagle, than the wooing of the dove—and so he thought was more suited to his taste ; but what did that signify ? Surely moonlight is to lovers a heart-aching light ; or instead of this fancying and recalling, and almost hopelessly speculating on the future, he would have dwelt upon the stirring events of the few past hours. At last, his poor cousin took possession of his thoughts, and he blamed himself for having permitted her to remain so long in a state of uncertainty as to her after prospects. He felt that if she had been drawn into this dilemma it was in a great degree his fault. He should at once, as his uncle's representative, have seen that she was properly placed, away from all associations that would have harmed or degraded her. He longed to speak with the dean, and learn more about the child of Annie Cumming : of that “Annie Cumming” who had had the power of transforming the Orson into the faithful lover, whose rugged nature was so softened even by a memory long past—a memory of one so completely sacrificed, as hundreds have been, to party purposes—party animosities—party disputes. Then his mind wandered to the scenes of the day. Turn the matter over which way he would, he could not understand why of necessity the Protestant must hate the Catholic, and the Catholic the Protestant. Abroad, he had seen them live together with the utmost love and tenderness—in England, they were friends ; but he had observed enough to prove to him the intense bitterness with which, singly and in masses, they regarded each other in Ireland. He hoped Ellen was a Protestant ; he hoped her brother had not attained a religious as well as a political ascendancy over her mind ;—and he almost hoped that the tale of Abel Richards was a fabrication. Still he did not like to give up the consciousness of Ellen's heroism ; it was something for his mind to rest on—the real almost exceeded the ideal ; it was a proud thing, misguided though she might be, to have such a kinswoman. He absolutely wondered if she were pretty ; yet avoided a reply, for on this subject Edward Spencer was fastidious ; his idea of womanly beauty being connected with exotics—refinements of all kinds, and, above all, small white hands and delicate feet—creatures of feeling, and sentiment, and poetry, rather than constituted as women too usually are—“to be, to do, and to suffer.” No, Ellen could not be lovely, but she ought to have been cared for : the thought made him ashamed that she had not been cared

for. And where was she now? the dean had promised to find her; her absence looked like fear—fear of the power Abel Richards had acquired.

His train of thought or reverie, half waking and half dreaming, was disturbed by hearing something trail through the waters, a little below the bank on which he reclined. At first he thought it might be a swan he had aroused, but he remembered how noiselessly the bird floats. Some wild animal—a badger, or otter, next occurred to him, and he walked slowly towards the noise, only, however, to see a man stooping over something that was dripping from the stream. Edward spoke, and the stranger, laying down what he was examining, advanced towards him.

“I have been waiting, Sir, about the place these two hours for Dean Graves, with a bit of a message from one he knows,” said the mild voice of Master Matt, the treasure-seeker. “Can you tell me if his reverence is in the place still?”

Edward at once recognised him, and the poor fellow was almost wild with joy.

“I’ve got it, your honour—I’ve got it now. My head was full of the one thing. I trod on a four-leaved shamrock this morning—here it is—as I was on my way here, and knew I’d be sure to find a treasure; and like a blinded mole, I thought but of the treasures hidden beneath stones and under waters—not of a living jewel—and I’ve been raking the river since the sun went down, thinking of the dean; and at last I got up something so heavy, and it was but an old hat, with an eel in it. I hate eels. Saint Patrick turned the serpents into eels, they say. It’s a Popish superstition, but there’s truth in it—

‘Eels of a morning,  
Are a dead man’s warning.’

But the shamrock brought me to you—God bless you!”

He spoke in his usual tone, which seemed but the echo of a voice, so low and chime-like were its intonations; and his face was more like a shadow than a substance, beneath the tree—it was so white and spectral.

Edward offered to find the dean, concluding that Master Matt brought some tidings from Ellen, and commenced questioning the schoolmaster closely, but it was useless—although his perceptions seemed quickened by her name. “There had been,” he said, “sad doings at Spencer Court—soldiers and disturbance. If the young master had been there it could not have happened; but no one minded an old man like him, or Mrs. Myler, or the servants. To sack and rack a Protestant house, as if it had sheltered rebels! No wonder his hair was white! and poor Mrs. Myler in fits, one fit after another, declaring she’d go back to the north. How could she live there—and Miss Ellen to go away—Oh, times were terrible!”

“But where was Miss Ellen gone?”

“Mrs. Myler could not tell.”

“Could he ?”

The schoolmaster paused, then said : “ Do not ask me—I *cannot* tell you—you might not be her friend, for you have never seen her—God bless her !”

Edward turned towards the castle, closely followed by Master Matt. They met the dean ; he had been in search of Edward Spencer ; the young man left the schoolmaster and the clergyman together, and returned to watch the moonbeams playing on the waters of the Sullane, and to muse on the past and speculate upon the future.

The lights were disappearing one by one in the castle, and the noise if not as continuous was more violent at intervals—expiring, it might be in convulsions. Presently the schoolmaster, followed by the dean, passed him, and he could not avoid gathering from their conversation that the treasure-seeker had lost a letter entrusted to his care ; his anguish at this seemed beyond all description ; he moaned and wept helplessly, while the dean was evidently too distressed to console him. “ Could you not conquer your mad propensity,” he said, “ until your mission was ended ? Could you not refrain and keep your thoughts fixed on the duty you had undertaken ?”

“ They will wander,” was the reply, as he clasped his hands on his forehead. “ I tell them to keep quiet, and at home, but they will leave me. I pinned it in the bosom of my coat with a silver bodkin, a rare curiosity, and buttoned it tight and kept it close ALL the way here, but in stretching the rake I burst the coat, and forgot my darling’s letter which she charged me to give into no hand but yours, and that privily and without words.”

If a letter had fallen upon the tide, it was of course swept onward by the stream and gone irrevocably ; but in reply to the dean’s entreaties to be told where Ellen was, and how she was situated, the master would only say, “ She told it to yer reverence all in the letter, and said I was to speak no word.”

It was in vain the dean entreated him to judge for himself.

“ Your reverence,” he said, “ knows that I have no judgment, that it has pleased the Almighty to take it away ; that I comprehend feebly like a child, and understand only as a child—I cannot judge. She told me, ‘ Speak no word about me, but give this, and bring an answer as you know how.’ I will speak no word about the child ; it may bring her evil ; the shamrock was not for good.”

Dean Graves knew that all argument was useless, for Matthew spoke the truth, he had no reasoning powers left ; tears poured down his forlorn face, and he sobbed bitterly. At last the dean said, “ Go whence you came, or where you know, and tell the truth ; tell her also, she has friends.”

The schoolmaster’s face brightened. “ I know *that*,” he said, and suddenly outstretching his arms upwards, he sank on his knees, and in a tone of deep pathos said, “ God and His angels are her friends !”

Edward heard and saw this, for he had joined them, and it

stung as a fresh reproach into his heart: truly she had had no others.

"Tell her, my dear Matthew," said the clergyman, while he pressed the chilled hands of the schoolmaster within his own, "not to fear, but to come to me to the Glebe as soon as she can."

"Yes!" he said; "that I will!" and eager as a child after a new employment, forgetting, or at least losing the bitterness of his past regret, he girded himself for the journey, and left the domain of Macroom Castle—how, Edward did not understand. The dean seemed sadly troubled with apprehension that Ellen's letter might contain something which, in the excited state of the country, he should not like to fall into the hands of any party, but more particularly their own; and they talked the matter over until a servant told the clergyman that "the Master" wanted to speak a few words to him in his own room.

Edward was again alone: sometimes three or four of the company came to the door, and stood and talked and laughed, but the revel and the riot, the hot debate and the wild song, had more fascination for them than the holy light of the waning moon. The night in truth was past, and the damp and shroud-like air clung coldly around him; the river was more distinctly seen, and a mist hung above—a gray thin mist—and Edward turned over the large water-lily leaves, and looked into the stream, hoping to find that which had been so carelessly lost. The blackbird, whose shrill *reveillé* sounds from his golden throat before the sun arises, or the other wood-birds shake the globules of dew from their feathers—the "royal blackbird" was stirring among the boughs, thinking of waking, and watching with half open eye the coming light—it will not be long before he meets and greets it so as to woo it to greater speed!

There was an increase of existence as the morning advanced—a murmuring of young life—a whispering amid the insect world—a humming, mysterious voice from beneath broad leaves, and out of deep-mouthed flowers. If the blackbird led the wood chorus, there were many birds to follow; the thrush burst into his eloquent music, and the grey wood-pigeons cooed—not loudly, as at mid-day—but lowly mutterings of love to their fledged, but attending broods. Still the air was chill, and Edward, really fatigued, resolved to inquire for his room, or bed, or whatever sleeping provision had been made for him.

He was returning to the castle, when he started at hearing his name called from out of one of those huge masses of Portugal laurel with which Irish gentlemen's domains abound. He had not time to inquire who this was, or what the new mystery might be, when, after a preliminary "Whisht!" which he had learned meant "silence," he heard, "Mr. Spencer, yer honour—whisht! --will yer honour whisht!—stop, and good luck to ye! Seem to be singing a song, minding nothing. They seen me in the kitchen; but they didn't know I had a little private business wid you. Sir, I'm Darby, that provided your honour with a post-boy of the right

sort—a devil for driving, and a rock of sense. Just divert yerself with a bit of a tune, or anything that way, till ye get below the great tree that bends so over the path that you can't get past, but are forced to go round it. Do, Sir—and God bless you!—and be quick."

Edward smiled as he obeyed the command. In a few minutes he had gone round the bough that, as he had been told, he could not pass, and found himself in a miniature jungle of brush-wood, from which Darby emerged.

"My heart's light to see yer honour—and God bless you! but my heart's heavy for all that. My poor cousin, Sir, Ignatius Doyle, you know—and you so good as to stop, and give them money—God reward you, and prepare a bed for you in heaven." The poor fellow turned aside, and sobbed heavily.

"Was it your cousin who was killed in some way, that does not clearly appear?"

"Faith, Sir, it was!" answered the man. "I knew if any one could find the truth, it would be yer honour; and some other time I'll insense you into the rights of it. It's the way we're all murdered—but it's not bearable for me to be taking up yer attintion. Heaven above knows he was as innocent as a new-born babby of any harm to any one. If they massacray all that have a mind to stand up for themselves, they'll massacray the whole country. But our time will come yet. The cause of my troubling yer honour is, that I have a bit of a letter from one you know, and one all the world blesses; and I want yer honour to cast yer eye over it just at once."

Edward thought it was more than probable the letter was of the same nature as the last brought to him by this volunteer postman, and said, crushing it within his hand, "Very well, Darby, I'll read it when I can see; it is impossible to read anything by this grey light."

"I'll settle that in a minute," was the ready rejoinder. "There's always a live coal in my pipe, and a whisp, or a dry stalk of hemlock, is bright by night—but I won't have the hemlock," he continued, tossing one of its over-grown and sapless stems into the water; "the dead pine is ready to blaze at a spark—and hemlock has an ugly name to read a lady's letter by."

No sooner said than done. "The live coal" was blown into a flame, and a bough of a pine, which had been smitten by lightning or decay, and hung from the tree, broken and kindled within the same moment. The effect was such as a painter might envy to see—the deep and rapidly-rolling river, the grey mist, half shrouding a landscape where, through the dimness, the trees stood out in quaint unearthly forms; the wild anxious look of poor Darby, bending forward with the flaring torch; while Edward turned more than half away, saying,

"I am worn and weary, and will look at it after I have had some sleep."

"And is that the message I am to take back, yer honour, afther

wearing every rag of skin off my feet, and breaking my heart, to be in time ; and not stopping at my own mother's sister's son's wake to draw a pipe, or take more than one glass of whiskey with them that's so near and dear to my heart's blood ? Is that the message yer honour gives me to take back to her ladyship ? ”

“ Whose ladyship ? ” inquired Edward.

“ Lady Mary O'Brien her own self,” was the reply,

“ And why did you not tell me that before ? ” he inquired impatiently, unfolding the crumpled paper, and trembling with impatience.

“ Yer honour never axed me, and more betoken when I gave it you, you scrunched it, as if the taste of her fingers had never been on it. Sure it wasn't in nature to suppose here I'd be, and my own flesh and blood and bones murdered beyant, unless I had strong rason. Well, glory be to God ! one wants grate faith intirely to sign the holy sign of the cross on one's bossum, and say 'God's will be done,' afther all one has gone through this blessed day.”

Darby talked on, half articulating, half muttering, but Mr. Spencer heeded him not. His attention was rivetted on the note ; and yet its words were but few : it said :—

“ I am more than half distracted. After you left this yesterday, I received intelligence which makes the movements of the military now at Macroom a matter of vital importance to one very, very dear to me.

“ I am certain you will be stopped on your way to Spencer Court at Macroom Castle ; they will be but too glad to have you amongst them—at least I cling to the hope that such is the case.

If the dean should be one, so much the better ; try and interest him in preventing any portion of the troops from searching Glen Flesk. I do entreat this *on my knees*, and if you can direct, or aid in directing them anywhere else, I will never forget it. I would not have my father know my anguish for worlds.

“ In the deepest anxiety, yours.”

A little below was added in a still more tremulous hand—

“ I hardly dare confide in the dean. Oh, that I had but hope ! —I am sure you will forgive me. Do you know where Ellen Macdonnel is ? ”

Edward was overwhelmed with contending feelings—pangs of the bitterest jealousy shot through his heart. Could it be possible that Lady Mary had so deep an interest in any one of those misguided men who were obliged to seek shelter in the mountain fastnesses of the country ? But to do him justice he was stirred by a far higher and better feeling. His nature was as chivalrous as sensitive, and he felt proud at having been so trusted by one he dearly loved. He thrust the letter into his bosom and strode hastily towards the castle without remembering his torch-bearer.

“Yer honour, what will I tell her honour?” inquired Darby, following.

“That her bidding shall be done,” was the emphatic reply; “but I will write.”

Darby still followed him. Mr. Spencer turned round and tossed him a guinea.

“God bless you, Sir,” he said, “but it wasn’t for that I followed you; only, as I am going rayther a dangerous road before I’ll get back to Cork, and if a line of writin’ was found on me, it mightn’t be pleasant for those who wrote, or those who ought to read. Can you give me a token—an eagle’s feather for strength, or a hawk’s for danger, or a curlew’s for flight; but yer honour’s in all sacrets, and knows all signs a dale better than the poor ear boy. Why not? Have ye any of the military pass words?”

Suddenly the not very distant beat of the drum, a sharp and quick *reveille*, startled both Mr. Spencer and Darby.

“Bad luck to yer noisy nothing of a body and your dirty skin! You’re all noise and no tune,” muttered Darby, skulking, at the same time, into a thicket of evergreens; for several people, among whom the accoutrements of one or two soldiers glittered brightly, were passing and repassing in front of the hall door.

“Are you on the move?” inquired Edward of a corporal who stood at the entrance.

“Yes, Sir.”

“Where to?” he said.

“Don’t at all know, Sir.”

“Is your commanding officer here?”

“Yes, Sir.”

The hall was nearly full; and some of the hard drinkers of the night—men whom Edward had not expected to see on their feet for at least a week—were in full possession of their vigour and spirits. He mingled with them, and saw the Master of the Castle, with undimmed eyes, and renewed energy, talking with his usual animation to an officer and one or two other gentlemen. The words “Glen Flesk” struck upon his ear—upon his heart—and he could not forbear inquiring what they meant.

“Some of our friends are on the road to that glen of the outlaw,” was the answer; “there will be warm work there before noon, I think. We shall unearth more than one fox, and shoot more than one traitor.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE TEMPTATION.

THE information communicated to Lawrence Macarthy by his sister, after the lapse of some hours from the time of his leaving Spencer Court, was of such a nature that he did not feel safe in the neighbourhood of his own dwelling. Month after month, he had been growing wild and reckless; (having nothing to lose except a life of which youth is so much more careless than age;) and if there chanced any outbreak—such as that organised and hoped for by the friend he had committed to Murtogh's care—he had all hope of gain. Still such was his respect for the honours of hospitality, that when his first burst of astonishment and dismay, at being so completely in the power of Richards, had subsided, he kissed the pale cheek over which tears were streaming, with more tenderness and brotherly affection than he had ever evinced towards her before.

“Villain as he is,” exclaimed the youth, “I would not have had him given an easy prey into my hands by a sister's treachery. It was a great opportunity, Ellen, to revenge the shot, the wrongs to yourself, the continuance of bitter injuries, and still more galling insults he has heaped upon me, the ruin and misery he has wrought to hundreds. Whenever I have resolved to become as you would wish me, that man has invariably crossed my path—like a fiend, to tempt me to fresh violence, fresh hatred of the race he springs from.” And then he paused, with darkened brow and clenched hands, until, as if strengthened and brightened by a new idea, he looked into his sister's face with a changed countenance, and sat down by her side on a rock that effectually concealed the entrance to one of the strongest holds of the wild and lawless bands of the South.

“After all,” he said, “after all, Ellen, since you have managed to get the papers, so invaluable, clear of Spencer Court and in safety, I do not see that there is much harm done. The proof against me at present rests solely on Abel Richards' word,—*you* have but to manage skilfully, admit having sheltered him, and deny altogether having seen me, and all will be right. Dean Graves knows you so well that he will never doubt your word, and his moral influence is paramount with others; the hypocritical oaths of Richards will not weigh against your single word, Ellen; and the story is so improbable, so much more like one of the ballads or romances Master Matt used to tell us, that no one will give credit to the tale. No one in the country would incline towards the ruffian at all, except just now, when love of destruction has taken more than usual hold on our rulers. I really think the sooner you get back to Spencer

Court the better ; you'll be looked after, and that quickly. I shall not keep out of the way ; why should I ? I think I see Abel Richards' accursed face when you deny his oath. You have only to be firm, Ellen—but I do not fear you."

But when the brother looked into the sister's face he did fear ; her tears had ceased ; her cheeks had flushed ; indignation was struggling with astonishment at the supposition that she would deliberately state a falsehood. "How strange it is," she said, "that you can think I did right in affording shelter, when it was asked, to our greatest enemy, and yet cannot feel that I should most shamefully sin were I capable of uttering so entire a falsehood." It was grievous to see how the spirit of cunning and dissimulation had sapped away and corrupted truth in a nature brave, but mismanaged from the cradle : how he could value, according to his feeling, the high honour, and yet see no wrong in the mean lie ! "God knows," persisted Ellen, "how earnestly and truly grateful I am, that your hands are unstained by blood : how I pray that the time may not be far distant when, withdrawn from this lawless life, you will seek your own honour and your country's good by worthier means."

"Silence !" exclaimed Lawrence, in one of those abrupt fits of passion he had latterly lost all power to control ; "the scene of the past night is as a wild dream. I was mad—insane—intoxicated, from first to last, or, with all my hatred of Richards, I would not have rushed as I did at such uncertain and brutal revenge ; but my great peril now is *from you*. I dare him to any proof without your evidence. He may say what he pleases, but if you contradict him, I am safe : and not I only, but the friend of our cause, who has given up everything that man holds dear for the sake of our trampled country—for the sake of a love which your cold northern nature has hitherto denied."

"You know," interrupted Ellen, "that I told you the papers are safe. If so, what has he to do with the matter?"

"True !" he said, "it concerns me only—at least for the present ; though you well know he is the hinge upon which events must turn. You know that we—he and I—are so linked together in all things for life or death, that if the outbreak tarries, we must triumph. The discontent of the people is at its height ; if its purpose can be directed, I repeat, we triumph. Ellen, on my life it was not I who first proposed this burning, though revenge on Abel Richards was too sweet to be withheld. The words I spoke were, I repeat it, madness. *You* would not convict me on their evidence—*you would not*."

"I would not—I think I would not," she replied ; "but you spoke them. Oh, what a fearful strait am I reduced to ! Had I uttered but a word, no power could have saved that bad, bad man ; he would have been hurried, with his weight of sins upon his head, into the Almighty's presence. And you, Lawrence, fierce, mad as you were—and my promise given to shelter him—it is almost impossible he can forget that I saved his life."

“ When *you* forget your kindred to your brother, to the only living thing that claims you, is it matter for wonder that he may forget,” he replied passionately ; and then with bitter irony continued : “ Irish indeed—you are not Irish. The Scotch blood of your mother, your Saxon breeding and refinement, have driven all feeling far, far from you ! Well, go back to your luxuries, and denounce the last of the Macarthys—your own brother—so that, at the next sunrise, a price will be set upon his head. Don’t cling to me, idiot ! ” he added, forcing her from him as she twined her arms round him : “ You know where the papers are ; so sell us all at a good price. Louis deserves this for his love, as much as I do for my kindred.”

“ Lawrence,” said Ellen, roused by this outrage from her tears and weakness, “ I will *not* go back to Spencer Court. I will conceal myself—anywhere ; I will obtain means to leave the country ; I will call upon the Almighty in mercy to take my life, sooner than it shall be spared to injure you ; but *I will not* lay falsehood on my soul.”

“ And what signifies your remaining away,” answered her brother scornfully ; “ of what use is it ? Richards may say what he likes—you are not there to contradict *him*. His word will be taken ; while your breath, your simple statement—fiercely panting as they are for sacrifice on sacrifice that needs so little form—your girlish word would be believed, and save me ! The dean, who boasts of nursing you in the truth, would vouch for that.”

“ He knows me better than you do,” was Ellen’s answer ; and then she spoke no more, but listened with a woman’s true and loving patience to all he said—fierce, bitter, violent, sarcastic—all by turns. She called to mind his peril ; she remembered the peril of the wild, uncertain, unorganised cause to which he was pledged ; she remembered also the danger of one whom she first knew when quite a childish girl, whose nature was “ half error, half romance ; ” and so she listened to words and taunts, that at any other time, under any other circumstances, she would have repulsed and buffeted, as an eagle beats down the snow that drifts across his airy pathway. Lawrence was richly endowed with the national gift of eloquence ; words flowed with ease and power from his lips, although untutored in courtly language ; and, combined with his wild and unrestrained habits, were a considerable degree of *cunning* (we can give it no more elevated name), and a carelessness, reckless and unprincipled, as to the means by which a desired end was to be obtained.

Ellen had written to Dean Graves by the hand of her old school-master, revealing no secret that was not strictly her own ; and yet the probable result of the letter, coupled with her brother’s violence, confused her more and more. She dreaded to tell him what she had written ; and while endeavouring to collect her thoughts, and subdue the tumult that was beating in her brain, Murtogh, Lawrence’s foster-brother, burst in upon them, full of news as to the movements of the soldiers, and anxious for the

safety of the only living creature his rude rough heart clung to in the world. It is notorious that, though many thousands of the Whiteboys knew the assembling stations, the pass-words, the *vital secrets* of illegal associations—formed by desperation born of misery, rather than suggested by any political object—and were perpetually tempted by the offer of rich rewards to betray their comrades ; yet they remain secrets unto this day. The evils resulting from this fidelity are to be deplored ; but the fidelity is in itself so extraordinary a proof of strength and firmness, that it commands instinctive respect. Such steadfastness is not the growth of a light-minded people—of a nation of triflers.

Lawrence and Murtogh conversed apart in low and earnest tones ; the latter ever and anon eyeing Ellen as if suspiciously, while her brother evidently regarded her with changed feelings. Or was this the result of her own fevered and disturbed imagination ? Did the river foam and sparkle ?—did one mountaineer after another rush from amid the adjacent underwood and down the hills, and gather round her brother, the last man still wilder in appearance than the first. Were their voices hushed and low, suppressed by a sense of danger, as if their words—as if the very air they breathed were fettered ? Sometimes they whispered in their native language, under tones of defiance mingled with emphatic descriptions of a danger, sudden and violent, and hard of escape. And did Lawrence, then, remembering that his friend, in whom they all trusted, was in peril more imminent than his own, command Murtogh to seek and save him, even to the spilling of his own blood ; while the devoted foster-brother only felt how hard it was to be separated from the one thing his nature clung to, though he flew to do his bidding ?

Was it, poor Ellen ! was it a distempered imagination whispering that the strong arm of the law was outstretched to AVENGE the wild doings of Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary—the midnight gatherings of Kilkenny—the burnings and secret outrages of Waterford and Cork—was it outstretched to avenge all these, strengthened by a soldiery eager with their aid ? She pressed her hands over her eyeballs, yet still stars floated before them ; stars and streaks of fire, and fountains of red—red blood ; and a cry that made her heart-strings shiver crept through her ears, filling them at last with the roll of drums and shrill brayings of trumpets, and then the cry again ; and the banshee of the Macarthies waved her arms, and walked over the waters that rolled beneath her feet. Then the hard voice of her brother spoke of her insultingly, and coupled her name with treachery ; and she would have spoken if she could, but her voice was gone ; she had no power to utter a sound or to move hand or foot. And then she was uplifted by some invisible power, and she felt as if all things connected with this world were over ; and from a burning heat she became deadly cold—the coldness that ices the blood, stagnates it as it flows, and then trickles and tingles through the half lifeless frame. There might, or there might not, have been *seeming*

unconsciousness, but she felt conscious—conscious of the presence of what she at any other time would have considered an *unreal* existence—the presence of the countless multitudes who, bodiless, shadowless, are still floating in our atmosphere, present at all times—it may be to see and understand, and feel for us ; they regarded her with eyes of sympathy and tenderness ; and yet she knew them not ; she sought in vain for any she had known, but there were none ; one came so very close to her, and folded its almost transparent wings above her head, and looked down upon her with such soft clear eyes, and such a sympathising expression—could it have been her mother ? The dream, or vision, or fancy, be it what it may, was kind and soothing ; the *ideal* was so different from the *real*, the untrue from the true, that again the current of her blood flowed on, and the extreme heat and bitter cold were alike gone, and her spirit self-returned to its present home.

She heard the mutterings of hard voices in Irish, mingling laughter and curses together, telling of projects frustrated and plans successful ; and then, close to her side, the low “hush-ooing” of a well-known lullaby which mothers and nurses sing to their children :

“ Avourneen sleep, for good angels are near ;  
 Avourneen sleep, there’s nothing to fear.  
 The cross on thy brow, and the cross on thy breast,  
 Will hushoo my darling to peace and to rest.  
 Sleep ! while the stars are bright !  
 Sleep ! ’tis a summer’s night !  
 Avourneen sleep ! there’s nothing to fear ;  
 Avourneen sleep ! for good angels are near !”

Biddy Doyle was by her side, but where she was she knew not. She lay upon a bed of clean straw, and her head rested on Biddy’s lap, who rejoiced “at her coming to herself again,” and would not suffer her to speak, but continued talking, telling her all the time that she must be kept as still and quiet as death itself, yet spoke of everything most likely to arouse her attention.

But it did not escape Ellen’s perception (which seemed to have suddenly and at once returned) that there were strangers in the room, or enclosure, and that arms, a gun and other weapons, leaned against the walls. Moreover, she felt assured that she was no longer at liberty to go and come—that she was, in fact, a prisoner.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE SHELTER OF THE GLEN.

THE morning that followed the night which had been so full of interest and mystery to Edward Spencer, was at first still and calm, but after sunrise the atmosphere became close and misty; the quiet, calm, suffocating "feel" that whispers of a coming thunderstorm, rendered all nature languid and seemed to overload the moments as they crept heavily along. It would be impossible to imagine anything more intensely still;—the valleys were so silent, that the murmurings of the little silver rivers, more than half dried by the intense heats of the preceding days, could be heard on the heights above Glen Flesk; the cattle in the lowlands clustered together wherever they found a tree to shelter them; and the sheep, still more timid, huddled beneath the shadows of the cliffs and huge gray stones; the soaring eagle returned to his station, as if fearing that the hurricane which gathered, cloud upon cloud, would, when it came in its might and power, be too much even for his daring pinions to bear up against—still he did not shrink from the approaching storm like the birds and coney-s that were his food, or even like the tame herds of the valley, but stood firmly, turning his head occasionally round, on one of the boldest pinnacles of Crohane, the chief of the wild and sterile hills, that—composed of broken and rugged rocks, patches of heather moor and moss, all varying in their elevations—stretch away on the west side, from north to south of the glen.

It is necessary that we should become intimately acquainted with this picturesque neighbourhood, and also with the more wild and sterile pass of Kaim-an-eagh. Glen Flesk is a gem of glens—a thing of wildness and beauty which every traveller ought to visit—not only because of its seclusion and variety of rock, river, and wood, but because of the romance and adventure, the struggle and the bravery of those who, from time to time, have made it their hiding-place.

The Annemore forms the western highland of this lovely glen; it is not so lofty as its statelier neighbour the Crohane, yet it deserves its name nevertheless—Annemore signifying the mountain of difficult passages; but its sides are equally precipitous, showing continued ranges of dark rocks, rising in terraces, one above the other, interspersed with heath and patches of coarse and most scanty pasturage. Sometimes the little Kerry cows mount to these spots, and excite the astonishment of the few passing strangers, as to how they got there, or how they can possibly get down—wild mountain creatures, as adventurous as goats and as sure-footed. The flats of this valley, along the low grounds and beside the river, are rich in pastures and tillage; and sometimes,

stretching up a fissure, are found patches of cultivation promising a due reward for the care bestowed by the cottiers who inhabit the lowlands.

At the period of which we write, the dwellings were not as numerous or as well cared for as they are now; but at all times they were picturesque from their situation, and the number of beautiful trees, that without the aid of landscape-gardening grew in the most fitting places—in fact they could not grow in that charming glen without adding considerably to the beauty of surrounding objects. The valley was also interesting as being inhabited by the almost unmixed and primitive race of Celts—strong in their attachment to their native glen, ready for a “spree” or a popular commotion, hating the Saxon as much as misguiding demagogues could desire to see him hated, ripe for a foray, and enjoying the “fun” of a pattern-fight with the zest and *goût* of practised “boys,” on all occasions that were fitting: and what occasion was not “fitting,” if a row could be produced between friends or foes?

Those who dwell continually within sight of God’s magnificence, who see His mountains, the resting-places of His clouds, who hear His echoes shouting to each other from the caves and crags, who watch torrent sporting with torrent until they mingle in the foaming river instinct with a mysterious life—who feel the unfettered wind playing round their heads, and with unwinking eyes watch the fiery arrows of the leaping lightning;—those who wake and sleep amid the terrors and wonders of creation are not so willing as those who breathe the calmer breath of lowland plain and enclosed valley, or the still more slavish air of pent-up cities and disciplined factories, to yield the ideas (if not very extensive, a dearly-cherished stock), which have descended—of late often their only heritage—for centuries from father to son. If you want to change the opinions of an unlettered man, you ought to change his employments and his localities:—you may *chain* an eagle at a mountain’s base, but as long as he *sees* the mountain he will struggle to soar into freedom. A Glen Fleskean would not take your purse, but he would not—we write concerning things as they were thirty years ago—consider it any sin to rive and ride your horse, to seize your gun; commit any “little act” which could be construed into *taking*, not *stealing*; always save and except in the case of strangers—for strangers in Ireland bear a charmed life.

The only knowledge of law he had was of its oppression—for where it did not in reality oppress, he was taught to believe it did. Restraint from Celt to Celt would have been endured: but the restraint of Saxon over Celt, has ever been unbearable—more particularly to the Irish cragsman. Every one is willing to sympathise with, or make allowance for, the peculiar habits and customs of the Scottish Highlanders—his hatred of the lowlands is considered part of his nature; his “black mail” furnishing subjects worthy of the painter’s skill; and his fidelity to the faith

of his fathers lauded in song and story ! Our Irish Highlanders are surely quite as deserving of sympathy ;—their history as full of incident and wild romance.

But the splendid tartans of the Scottish Highlanders have gained them as much popularity in England as their chivalry. Sympathy has been more gracious to the tartan than to the rags of the poor Irish peasant.

It is pleasanter to dwell upon rugged scenery, than upon rugged truths ; the lion has his lair, the fox his den, and the eagle its eyrie, and there can be little doubt that our natures partake through life of the character of our early associations. This should be borne in mind as an act of justice towards those we judge.

Glen Flesk, as we have said, is like many other Irish glens, noted for the ready refuge it has frequently afforded to outlaws ; in truth, to all sorts of "boys" who, for a time, or under peculiar circumstances, found the open plain a dangerous locality. The legendary landmark of the glen is the well-known *Phil-a-dhaoun*, or the demon's cliff. It is a succession of precipitous rocks, feathered, rather than clothed, with foliage, with here and there a miraculously rooted tree, gaining nutriment you hardly know how, and yet throwing its branches far and wide over the gray rock from which it seems to spring. The succession of rocks forms the face of the Crohane mountain, where the valley opens, as it were, to admit the beautiful river, and give full scope to its graceful windings beneath banks, in some places high and picturesque, at others sloping to the water's brink. The old Kenmare road runs between the Flesk and the base of the mountain. Half way up this dangerous, and in stormy weather almost inaccessible ascent, is shown an indentation in the rock, called *Labbig Owen*, meaning "the bed of Owen ;" the said Owen having been a most notorious rapparee and free-booter in old times. It might be imagined that this spot, once so noted as a place of outlaw refuge, would be avoided by others as likely to excite attention ; but, on the contrary, the Crohane and Annemore mountains have always been the resort of such as were obliged to seek concealment ; and any one who has passed a week of long summer days exploring such of the fastnesses as are attainable by lowland feet, would wonder how it is possible to discover those who seek mountain sanctuary, remembering that, no matter what the reward may be, every man, woman, and child, would suffer death sooner than give up to the law, any, who had the least desire to escape from it ; indeed, the bare fact of wishing to "escape the law" is quite sufficient to call, not only Irish sympathy, but Irish ingenuity to the rescue. Owen the Outlaw was, it is said, betrayed by a man called Reardon, who sought, by this act, to gratify private revenge, and succeeded in "murdering" his friend in the glens of Inveleary, to which he had enticed him. He also, with savage ferocity, beheaded his victim ; and the reproach of this deed remains to his descendants,

who are but little trusted, and are still reproachfully termed *Reardan na ocean*, “Reardon of the head.” The whole district is full of traditions. A belief in fairy lore and witchcraft mingles with religious faith, and imparts a more than ordinary degree of wildness and superstition to the habits and feelings of the primitive residents. They know little of the worldly doings of their countrymen beyond the glens; and, as is the case almost uniformly with the peasant population of Ireland, place implicit reliance on the statements of their clergy—while exercising keen perceptions, with which they are amply endowed, in doubting and investigating whatever comes to them from any other source.

A most commandingly placed wreck of the past—which must perpetually recall to the peasant the tales of former times—is still an object of interest to the stranger. Killala Castle, an old fortalice of the O’Donoghue, was erected to guard this once important pass; and many a night had the treasure-seeker spent in circling its walls, and hunting for the riches he imagined must be concealed in the immediate neighbourhood of the guard-chamber, beneath which it is believed one of the race of Irish giants lies entombed. Every step through this romantic locality is full of beauty and interest, whether visited when the sun shines upon its lovely scenery, or when the storm adds its might to the majesty of the mountains; but the glensmen are grown of late so much like their neighbours, that the imagination must go back to the excited Whiteboyism of our period to see them transformed into Irish Guerillas—resolved to protect whoever sought shelter in their mountain fastnesses.

It was evident that the military had received information that some one they desired to secure was secreted in the glen, and the extraordinary anxiety evinced by Edward Spencer that another route should be pursued by the soldiers, afforded subject for much speculation to the Master of Macroom and his friends, as to *why* Mr. Spencer’s views could be opposed to theirs. Information as to all military movements was so rapidly conveyed, and became known to the people in distant districts in so extraordinary a manner, that unless plans were formed and carried into execution without being breathed of to those who were the agents therein, they were frustrated either previous to the onset or termination of the undertaking. Numberless delays occurred before the detachment that was to scour Glen Flesk was able to leave Macroom, and much astonishment was expressed as to Mr. Spencer’s motives for urging the most trifling reasons for further delay.

The approach of the elemental strife, the muttering of the thunder first disturbed the death-like calm in which Glen Flesk had reposed for many hours, seeming at one moment to proceed from the pinnacle of a rock around which the electricity had been discharged, while at another it swept along the arch of heaven, cloud after cloud, blackening and brightening as the forked or sheet lightning mingled with the feverish air.

In the fissure of a rock which commanded an extensive view,

yet when looked at from the road appeared only a long deep crack, two men were seated, evidently in very different situations of life, and yet on terms of equality—both were nearly the same age, but the greatest possible difference existed in their appearance. One reclined completely within the ample crevice, and had so arranged himself as to use a portion of the more elevated rock as a table, upon which rested a brace of pistols primed and loaded, and a flask of gunpowder; on one side was a division that held ink, while a few sheets of writing paper were placed before him. The delicate hands, a brilliant ring, and the well cared-for hair of a fair colour and silken quality, no less than the indescribable well putting on of the blue “big coat” and peasant gear of the district, intimated anything but a glensman; while his companion, who was evidently on the look-out, and heeded neither heat nor cold, wet nor dry, storm nor sunshine, was stretched along at his feet, his hands grasping the edge of the precipice, and his chin resting on his hands, so that his large shaggy head, if seen at all from the road, must have looked like a clod of turf, a lump of withered furze, or a bunch of embrowned heather. The large blue eyes of the gentleman whom Murtogh invariably called “Captain,” looked heavy and weary; his elevated, but compressed forehead was white and feverish, for heat drops stood upon it, which he frequently removed with a silk handkerchief; and there was a mingling of wildness and fervour in the expression of the upper part of his face, that did not at all harmonise with a sensual mouth—still there was energy of purpose, and the wild freedom of “*I will*,” in the rapid and loud tracing of his pen, and the determination which contracted his rather extensive eyebrows.

Murtogh “of the Strong Hand” was few removes, perhaps, from a savage. Keen, cunning, revengeful, cruel, but faithful, watchful, and undeviating in his few attachments—superstitious to positive weakness; his dark, deep, blood-shot eye, that never quailed at difficulty, would tremble amid tears of terror at the mention of a ghost, or a tale of supernatural agency. He seemed (besides his faith) to entertain but two ideas, or even thoughts—Ireland was his country, and Lawrence Macarthy was his foster-brother. How he came to be separated from him at a time of danger, and attending upon a comparative stranger, was a mystery only to be solved by the knowledge that such was Lawrence Macarthy’s desire. The storm was as welcome to Murtogh as the sunshine; unless, indeed, it occurred at some particular time—some festival or unlucky day. Such, however, was not the case on the day alluded to at the commencement of this chapter, and consequently the hardy mountaineer did not deign to notice the huge drops of rain that fell like giant’s tears from the full clouds; although they had compelled his companion to withdraw still more closely into the cave of the overhanging rock; a movement noticed only by a scowl of Murtogh’s deep fiery eyes. Like all hardy cragsmen, he had a thorough contempt for any one who

sheltered from the elements ; and like all Irishmen, something closely allied to the same feeling towards all of feeble or delicate appearance. His father had been hung by martial law, while he was yet an infant ; his brothers had been transported for Whiteboyism, which caused Murtogh or Murtogh's party to take summary vengeance upon those who had borne witness against them. His mother wandered through the country in a state of half insanity, generally a scarcely covered mendicant, whining for halfpence, or meal, or potatoes, at every door ; but in times of popular excitement, a fiend, a fury—losing all self-command, and thirsting, as much as any tigress, for human sacrifice. Sometimes Murtogh affected not to understand English, but the truth was, he spoke it imperfectly—thinking in Irish, and translating his ideas for the captain's benefit. The latter covered his face with his hands, so vivid were the flashes of lightning in the dark and narrow space to which he had retreated ; the act was noted by the keen Murtogh, who muttered something not particularly complimentary to the captain's bravery.

“What are you saying ?” inquired his superior, in the tone, if not of an Englishman, of one who had spent much time in the country of the Saxon.

“That yer honour's not fond of flame,” was the reply. “I've seen the lightning scorch Macarthy's eye-lashes, and he wouldn't wink.”

At that moment a blast of the fire-king's breath struck a tall slender birch-tree, which, with its shining bark and quivering leaves, and young bright look, as it stood beside a sturdy but grovelling oak which extended its thick and lumpish trunk first in one direction, then in another—had seemed the young Apollo of trees. It was wonderful to see the white light shimmer and shiver amid the sapful branches, which in an instant it blasted, and burnt, and tossed to the storm as unworthy of further trouble, peeling the bark off the bleeding body, and then leaping from its prey to the rock, which it shattered into a thousand fragments, that went hurling and tumbling into the valley below. While the Spirit of the Clouds, so fierce and mysterious, so abrupt and all powerful, was buried fathoms deep in the mountain, impregnating the air with a dense and suffocating vapour, Murtogh raised himself a little on his elbow, and with his right-hand crossed himself on both brow and breast, and then resumed his position. The storm now changed into a hurricane of wind and rain. The torrent poured and whirled in such a manner, that the glensman could discern nothing beneath but drifts upon drifts of rain and mist—clouds of water in perpetual movement, now of a deep lead colour, and then of a pale gray—on and on they swept, impelled by the rushing winds.

“What a dreadful storm, Murtogh !” said the gentleman, folding his *cotamore* still more closely round him, chilled by the damp raw air, and so oppressed by the state of the atmosphere and his own peculiar situation, as to be scarcely able to breathe

"what a dreadful storm, Murtogh! is it often as bad as this?"

Murtogh rolled himself over and over, so as to get nearer his companion, and answered, "Dis is noting, Sir—a little fre and noise, and some fog."

"Why, look at that tree," said the young man, pointing to where a tortured branch of the stricken birch, held on to the shattered stem by a long line of the bark, was twisting in the wind; the bough seems to wave a notice to us, that we may be so served at a moment's warning."

"Or widout it," said Murtogh, "be dad and dad, captain, we may get no warning at all; why would we be better off den our naighbours?"

"If," muttered the captain, "they would but combine—if any thing like a simultaneous rising was organised, our long-promised help would soon arrive; but before they are up in one place they are down in another, meeting by moonlight and separating, satisfied with burning a house, or murdering a farmer, or drawing a man's coffin on a door."

"And isn't dat doing a grate dale?" whispered Murtogh, who, with his habitual freedom, had drawn himself up close to the gentleman; "sure for every one we send off, we have one tyrant or one wake heart de less; and if de boys of all Ireland kep on true to dat, sure we'd soon have de land agin,—finish all dat we don't like dat's in it, and let none we don't like come in it—dat's de plan."

The young man made no reply to this, but the contrast between the sun-dyed brown of his companion's (or attendant's, call him which you please) face, and his own pale thin features, made him seem more dejected than ever.

"Dere's a good many away, one place and de oder," persisted Murtogh, "and a power and all dead, God bless us! who tought demselves sure enough of dere dirty lives dis time twelvemonts; and dere would have been more but from two or tree turning off from dere'work—dey'll do so no more; a turner back is worse dan if he never came on."

Whether this was, or was not a hint to his less determined associate, it is impossible to tell, but he changed the subject immediately by observing, "The Macarthy said you would tell me what luck you had at the last drawing?"

"Grate luck, be dad and dad, captain, only for one ting dat I can't forget. I had been wid de boys to Lanty Lurgan, de schoolmaster's, who writes de notices for us, he's such fine larning—he says to us, 'Boys, ye have noting to do wid de government, lave dat to de counsellor, but get rid of de landlords and de middlemen, and don't lave one alive in de place dat brakes yer laws; if de bit o' land is taken contrary to de laws—no matter who it's by,' he says, 'you know your luty.'"

"Suppose," interrupted the captain, "your own brother was

to take land from which a tenant had been ejected for not paying his rent, what would you do?"

"No broder of mine would ever do a ting like dat," growled Murtogh.

"But if he did?"

"Where's de good o' saying what couldn't be?" replied the half savage.

"But it might be; brothers are not always alike; suppose it was—what would you do?"

"Dey'd not ax me to do de job," he answered, with indifference.

"But you'd warn him?"

"He'd get our reg'lar warning."

"But in such a case, wouldn't you prevent it?"

"I couldn't, captain, I couldn't. If he went agin' rules, why I couldn't help him."

"But, Murtogh, you could prevent it, by giving information."

Murtogh sprang up as if he had been shot, looked steadily at the captain, while his frame quivered with passion, and then, in a voice of apparent agony, said, "Och, captain, what did I ever do to you to make ye think I'd turn informer?"

"I did but jest, Murtogh," said the stranger, "I did but jest."

"It's an unnatural joke den, be dad! and I'd rader yer honour didn't try it on me agin. Sure we prove every day dat we've no care for life or death—dat we'll live in a master's house and ate his food for seven years, and yet not put away de gun dat's pointed at his heart, if he brakes our laws, and turns out an ould tenant for a new one."

"Suppose the old tenant won't pay."

"Sure every boy would pay if he could."

"Not always—suppose he was a scoundrel."

"Don't make me mad again, captain, wid yer supposings. What's dat to me? if my oath is marked down in heaven, and I'm under command—broder, fader, friend—it's all one."

"Ah, Murtogh, you're a fine fellow, caring for nothing but the 'wild justice of revenge,' I see," answered the captain.

Murtogh did not quite understand the words, and said, "Say dat again, iv you place."

"I said you cared for nothing but the wild justice of revenge."

"If one takes my life," he answered shrewdly, "by taking all I have to keep de life in me and mine, it's raale justice to take his for it. But I'll own to de revenge," he said, rubbing his head violently with his hand, "I'll own to de revenge. I'm ready night or day to 'attind when called on,'—it's all one," and he eyed his questioner closely and suspiciously, not certain as to his meaning.

"Well, go on with Lanty Lurgan's opinions—the story of your luck," said the gentleman.

"Oh, Lanty's a fine man! has a power o' knowledge, and sure

if he, a priest's broder's son, would join us, it's asy known we're in de right every way. Sure when de like o' dem dat has larning is for a ting, what call have we to stir only as we're bid. It's a fine ting to have de likes o' deim to stand up for us, and by us, and sure it's dey have all de weight of it on demselves ; and so be de same token, says Lanty, 'Who should I see at de last fair, where I wint to sell de little pig dat I tuck from de Widdy Murphy for her son's quarter's Latin, and to buy mee little things for mee little school—who should I see swaggerin' trough de fair, in a bran new baaver and top-boots, an' de price of de cow he distrained on from *one of us* by de Blackwater—but Japers Connel ; and by de same token he had a *bulldog* in his breast ; and, boys, he got notice on his own house-door twice ; and once, an' he on de road home afther *making his soul*, De 'Silent Foot' put another into his hand to tell him he must quit de land he tuck over Riley's head, or suffer for it—for he had de two crimes on himself.'"

"Riley of the Stream ?" questioned the captain.

"De same, captain, dat was transported, and his bit o' land tuck from his broder ; 'So boys,' says de schoolmaster, 'it's all fair and round as eggs, dat his account must be made up quick ; he got his notice like any gintleman, and dat tree times ; and afther dat de boys mind de rule, 'to attind when called on ;' 'and now,' he says, 'we ought to draw lots who's to do de little job out of de way at once, for it's a bad example, afther de notice, to see him swaggering about ;' de last fellow of de kind we got *shut of*, de Blackwater boys did it for *us*—and now it's *our* turn to do it for *dem*. Well, it was all 'attind when called on,' and de lot fell on Paddy Lacey."

"Why I thought it was you had the luck !" interrupted the gentleman.

Moving a little so as to turn his back in a degree to the storm, Murtogh took no notice of the interruption, but continued :

"Well, Paddy was overjoyed, because his sister was to be married de same night to a Blackwater boy, and it was mighty convanient to 'attind when called on ;' and get de fun of de wedding altogeder—and he says to me, 'I owe you a kind turn, Murtogh, for de alibi, you swore to, last 'sizes, for my fader's broder-in-law—as bould as a ram.' 'Oh ! dat's noting,' I says, laughing, 'betwixt friends, noting at all ; it's grate fun, a down-right raale alibi, swore and proved through as good as forty oaths, in an' out—boddering de big wigs, just when dey tink dey have it all dere own way ; de poor boy trembling in de dock wid de rope round his neck, and no more trouble to de law, but to pull it ! When in comes forty witnesses to prove de alibi ! Oh, it's raale glory !—and de faces of 'em !'

"Well, though he'd no more mind his call den shooting a rat, he tought a dale of, as he called it, poor fellow, my parjuring *my soul* for his fader's broder-in-law—and more, on account of fearing to go nigh de priest, to get ase in his own mind—through a pilgrimage or someting like dat. 'So come wid me,' he says,

'now, de girls at de Blackwater are as fond as yerself of music; and we'll settle Connell at de same time; only remember, I'm first, and you're second.'

"You had never seen Connell, had you?" inquired the captain.

"Och! no, he never did harm to me or mine; I had no call to de man at all, and was as innocent as any babbey of an ill thought towards him or his:—praise be to God! But I had all his marks; and so I quit, wid Paddy Lacey, and mighty pleasant walking it was, as any one could desire, falling in wid our own boys now and agin, changing our little pass-words, and hearing de news—mighty pleasant; only once, when we had a meeting at a place beyond Macroom—dey call it by de name of Kilcrea—all de boys in dere white shirts."

"Were you there?" inquired the captain.

"Sure an' I went near it," he answered, shuddering, "but couldn't get to it, on account, Sir, of de spirits, and de tousands o' dry bones piled to all eternaty in de holy ground. Why even Master Matt has no call to Kilcrea—devil a bit—after ten at night! De four-leaved shamrogue he carries in his breast lets him into sacrets, and so he wouldn't touch a stone. I couldn't go; though Lacey did. I knelt down by de first arch of de bridge to keep de water betwixt me and de spirits, and said every prayer old Madam Macarthy ever taught me, when I used to be playing pitch and toss and hurley wid de young master long ago—and she'd make us both kneel down (God be good to her!) and say over the pather and the aves, and den curse de Orangemen. Oh, it's she was de fine woman entirely—and de grate saint!"

"I remember Lawrence telling me you were afraid of spirits," said the young man, carelessly; "but the Kilcrea meeting was a great loss. Every man that night swore *the oath* at the altar, and bent his knee over the tomb of Arthur O'Leary. It seemed," he said, sighing, "a gathering for a great purpose. You ought to have been there, Murtoh."

"One can't have luck right and left," said Murtoh. "If de daylight was in it, I'd a been dere too, but I can't abide bonds. When Lacey came to me I was more dead den alive, for fear of de sperits. But we had fine company into Cork, just for a spree, and den de next morning we found our ground; and I wanted to get it over quick; for de man never did noting to me; only Paddy paid me de compliment on account of de good turn I tould you of."

"And did you find Connell at once?"

"Bee Gorra! we did not. He was gone to Kilkenny; and we war bound to follow him dere; but hearing he was to be back de next night, we tuck our fill of de whiskey punch, and de dancin' dat night at de wedding, and lay about de place, inquiring for work de next morning."

"And you caught him, did you?" inquired the young man, in a tone of voice which would lead to the belief that he would have been better pleased if the man had escaped.

"We did. Dere was a little grove o' trees close to his gate inside, and a high hedge opposite. We hid under de hedge—and Paddy saw him come riding down de road. I tought, as he came up at a canter, dat we had no luck, for his eldest boy ran up de avenue and unfastened de gate. It was as much as Paddy could do to keep hisself from shootin' de young blaguard, but tree or four of de young ones had got into de grove o' trees, and put dere little faces over de ditch, shouting 'Fader, fader.' And he pulled up, and tossed over his hat among 'em; and it was half full of playtings for dem; and faix I'll not deny dat de shout of dere joy made meeself uneasy, just at de minit, an' I forgot how he acted contrary to our rules—taking and keeping land over our heads—I forgot all. 'Paddy,' says I—bang went de shot, *his bald head was de mark*, and Paddy wasn't de fool to miss it—dere was no need of a second! Dat was my last draw, and but for it I'd have had a shout at Black Aby's burning; only dat was done in a hurry: ye may fire a shot in a hurry, captain, but it's mortal bad not to tink and get all safe at a burnin', for it wakes up de counthry."

"And—and—did you shoot the children?" inquired the captain, and it might be that the keenness of the mountain air made him shudder.

Murtoch turned towards him with a look of intense disgust.

"Shoot de childre! is it shoot de childre ye said, Sir? be dad any one who has been a sojur has no heart in his body—shoot de grawleens; *yarra! is it murderers ye'd have us be, captain?* The Lord forgive ye!"

"And did no one see you? It was day, I think you said?"

"Ough, ay! plinty saw us; but sure they are all sworn in; they knew it was all according to our law; sure where's the good o' thinking about it? he brought it on himself; he had as fair warning as ever a man had in his life, and there's the end of it; he had a mighty fine funeral—for barring he was hard on the tenants, he was good to the poor."

"Did you go to the funeral?"

"I did not; I never care to hear an ullagawn any more than to see ould bones."

There was a long pause.

"Is that another clap of thunder?" inquired the captain, at the same instant starting to his feet, and then wincing as if from extreme pain.

Murtoch was instantly at his old post, but this time his head projected considerably over the cliff, not so as to distinguish objects, any effort to do that would have been unavailing, but to catch any sound the dense atmosphere permitted to ascend.

"Again!" exclaimed the captain, "*that* is not thunder," he added, and his nature seemed as if called by some sudden and mysterious power into active life.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE CHAINED EAGLE.

THERE are hours during which we live years, if time be calculated by events—events that often make age a premature affliction, and not the natural issue of life. The gentleman whom, in compliance with his foster-brother's command, Murtogh had treated with so much care, had, in consequence of an accident—a fall from his horse, which compelled him to remain inactive and concealed—obtained abundant time to regret what he could not recall. He was one of many who are guided by impulse rather than reason—the impulse of a weak but generous nature—to force a people into struggles which happily they have had neither means nor strength to maintain. He had fancied, as highly imaginative persons are apt to do, that the standard of liberty once raised, would be supported by all who suffered under, and hated, English rule ; he believed both Orange and Green averse to Saxon sway, and that the Orange would only sustain the power of England as long as England kept in the position of its ally. Because he, in his own case, heeded the grievances of Ireland rather than the complaints of party, he hoped, he dreamed, that so also it would be with others ; he was willing to lay down his life for a country or a cause, but not for a feud or a foray—a mad unsupported resolve to do or to undo. He had spent his earliest youth in a service into which he had been forced by circumstances ; and having joined it but a few months before the termination of the Peninsular campaign, the inactivity that succeeded became irksome to him ; and he did not deny to himself or to others, that meeting Ellen Macdonnel, when away from her country and full of enthusiasm she filled his heart with love and his ears with the poetry of Irish revolt, he dedicated himself to a contest which had not only no tangible object, but out of which it was utterly impossible that any good could arise. Time and practical observation had changed the wild girl into the reflective woman, but Louis, as he was named, had not witnessed this change ; and the little he saw of Ellen, when he followed her to Spencer Court, did not permit him to judge of it. Lawrence was by far too deeply interested in keeping his sister's lover in the dark as to her real feelings, to permit him to believe that her patriotism, as he considered it, had cooled ; but the influence created by his relationship to the lady of his friend's attachment gave, had urged that friend to a course from which he could not withdraw ; and he had the anguish of knowing, that if discovered he would involve, in greater ruin than they had yet endured, his own noble family, which had suffered much in various ways. It had sounded gloriously—the emancipation of a brave people ; the forcing England to abandon her claim to the Emerald of her crown, by a guerilla warfare ; by

the training of brave, bold men to the extirpation of a race of "tyrants;" the trumpet voice of victory or death!—the poetry of war, so bright and so brilliant!—the real appealing and appalling misery of a people crying from the depths of their despair; feelings such as these, together with promises—or, to speak more correctly, imaginary promises—of support, both at home and abroad, had led, not only Lawrence, but his better informed friend Louis, to believe that something like a consistent and well-supported national struggle might really be made.

Much as Louis loved the people, he was stricken with horror at the cold-blooded system of murder to which such men as Murtogh had become accustomed, and which, as in his case, they justified so calmly—resting the weight of the sin (if for a moment they so considered it) on others, satisfied that the perpetration of such atrocities was what their country demanded of them; and yet it was impossible not to admire the fidelity which bound them to each other in its chain of more than Spartan secrecy and endurance. One moment he shuddered at their crimes; the next, his heart glowed with admiration of their virtues; vices and virtues, which never so closely meet together in any other country of the world.

The government had suffered the disturbances to proceed without much effort to suppress them. Famine had rendered the people more than usually careless of consequences, and those who would have restrained them from personal violence, now discovered how difficult it was to confine them to one great idea, or to lead those who had nothing to sacrifice, and whose own wild wills goaded them on to their own destruction, and the destruction of others. At last, the higher members of the community, the magistrates and "the castle," conceived it necessary to do "something," and thus originated the meetings at Macroom, Kenmare, and various towns throughout the country; and the "something" done in 1822, was just the "something" done during the whole period of English rule over Ireland previous to that year; namely, placing the country under martial law, burning, and hanging, and shooting those whom fever and starvation had spared. And, doubtless, when the hunt was closed, and the "dogs of war" were whistled back: when the judges were wearied with passing sentences, and the ships heavy with convicts; when there were many widows and orphans in the disturbed districts—then "the troubles," as in former days, would be pompously announced as "over;" the country reported as "tranquillised;" no effort made to employ and pay those who were growing up to manhood with no other occupation than the memory of their sires' wrongs; no hope beyond hunger, revolt, and death!

Before he sought the wild shelter of Glen Flesk, Louis had fully comprehended not only the danger which threatened him personally, but the overthrow of all his plans. If the sickness and the famine had not preceded his movement it might have had a different result: but some of the stoutest hands and bravest hearts had fallen of the pestilence, the spirit of the adjacent counties

was crushed, and there he lay, unable to help himself or others. There was that about Murtogh which told Louis there was no true sympathy with him,—in every movement of Murtogh's wild eyes, in every tone of his voice, in all he did, he saw evidence of his obedience to Lawrence, but no regard for himself; while each effort he made to restrain until the proper time, or to concentrate strength, scattered idly throughout the country, was regarded as proof of coldness, if not treachery to “the cause.”

It was not thunder that had roused the attention of the captain and the glensman in Glen Flesk, but a sharp volley of musketry. Louis had received warning as to his peril, but here he was, like a wounded eagle on a rock from which he had no power to fly. In a moment, he buttoned his coat, concealed some papers beneath a stone, secreted the pistols within his bosom, and stood forth, bending also to listen with an air of concentration and self-support, his features firmed by danger, his feebleness apparently gone, and his eyes brightened.

“Dey must be worse dan devils if dey can breast dis wind in de glen,” whispered Murtogh; “and dere's not many horses.”

“They cannot climb the mountain in this fog,” said the captain, half drawing a pistol. “Surely, surely, Lawrence and Ellen are safe!”

“Dey are far enough off to be safe,” was the answer, “and we are all safe while de fog lasts, I couldn't find mee way here meeself in such a scrimmage; it's trusting to de fog de boys war to let 'em come so far.”

“Is that the scream of an eagle, Murtogh; you know these mountain sounds better than I do?”

“No,” was the reply, and sympathy with his own kind forced Murtogh to grasp the strong fern and crush it in his hands, “no; it is de cry of women—dere isn't a man in de glen, and 'cause dey can find noting else to do, dey're burning de cabins—look!” and truly a sort of glare, lurid and hot, ascended with the dense mist from the entrance to Glen Flesk; and then another shot followed.

“Let us down!” exclaimed the young man, in a state of frenzy. “I cannot remain here, it is impossible.”

“Asy,” said Murtogh, “first and foremost, ye'r not able to climb; would ye bid de fox lave his airth when de hounds are off de scent? Whisht!”

Again he listened, leaning over the precipice, one hand holding his thick and matted hair back from his ear, the other grasping his companion's ankle as with a manacle.

“Lawrence leaving me here to be baited and hunted,” he muttered. “Oh, what a fool I have been!”

“Whisht, will ye,” muttered Murtogh.

The rain still poured in torrents, thick and dense as ever, but the wind had abated, and the unfortunate young man thought he heard mutterings—voices—on the mountain, that must proceed from persons nearer than the glen.

“Down,” at length growled the savage, “down here!” and almost without an effort, so strong was he, such power did he possess in his long bony arms, that he lifted the captain on a ledge just beneath where he himself had lain, as if he were an infant, arranging the long grass and the stricken boughs of the birch over him with a practised hand. “Now,” he said, “whatever comes, lay still, and if I am caught and murdered before yer eyes, still lay still; but tell Masther Lawrence dat his foster-broder kep his word.”

The sounds continued at intervals, but all so mingled with the rude bursting and whirling of the storm, that he could hardly trust the evidence of his senses. He fancied each sound near him was the step or the breath of his murderer, while he grasped his sword in vain, and felt the prayer he would have uttered gasping in his throat; he strained his eyes towards the spot where Murtogh had disappeared, but could discern nothing through the dense folds of mist which, arising from the glen, hung rather lower than midway, so as effectually to prevent his discerning aught beyond the thick veil of obscurity.

After some time had elapsed, the silence became so painful that the heavy flapping of a raven’s wings was a relief; the bird, attracted probably by the scent, alighted on the blighted tree, and peered at him with a curious eye, as if to ascertain whether he were dead or alive. This familiarity of the “wise man’s bird” assured him of the fact, that he could be in no immediate danger; for if any human being were moving, the bird would not have been there. He was stiffened with cold, chilled to the very heart; the bruises of his arm and side now became exquisitely painful; he tried to move, and at his first effort the raven rose, and flapped heavily away, croaking more than once as it disappeared. With the rapidity so characteristic of mountain scenery, the mist rolled aside; and as he lay, he looked down into the glen; it was as if some sudden magic had spread the scenery of Glen Flesk beneath his ken; endowed with tenfold beauty, the river was rushing and foaming along its course, a sudden burst of sunshine illuminating the landscape, and causing every tree to appear sheeted with diamonds. Wild, unearthly spirits seemed floating on the wreathed clouds that hung on every crag.

He could hardly believe the evidence of his senses, for no living thing was moving in Glen Flesk; torrents were rushing down the hills, brawling and wrestling on their way; leaping in sport fathom deep, from crag to crag in mimic cataracts, or twisting and twining like liquid silver through brown moss and the brightest greenery; but there were no soldiers. Further still, beyond where the river bends—yes! there certainly hovered above one particular spot where cottages had clustered beneath the last setting sun, a dense pall of smoke. No cloud of heaven was ever so dark, so woolly, so bituminous, as that; it dared not raise itself to those gentle vapours that hung around—above it; but, foul and earthy, it hovered close to earth, the evidence of man’s

destruction. The stranger felt his eyes grow moist. When last he passed that cottage cluster, he had noted children playing in a deserted garden, where the grass was crushed into a playground ; he had entered one cabin, where the mistress, while weeping that her husband and brother had been buried but a month before, offered him the rest and refreshment (such as it was) he so much needed.

He knew the history of every dweller in that little cluster ; he knew them to be secret, yet simple ; harmless—for the population, shorn of its strength, consisted almost solely of women and children! What a sad contrast was there in the natural and moral beauty of this scene ! But more than all was he perplexed to know what had become of the military ; had they ridden like wild huntsmen of German story through the glen on the whirlwind ? or had they contented themselves with firing the cottages, and retreating ?

Again the clouds closed beneath him, and all was bright above ; as though the vapours in mercy shut out the wretchedness of earth from those angel spirits that mourn its fall. The silence continued unbroken, save by the voices which nature lends her streams and torrents. Painfully did the stranger creep from the rocky ledge where Muilogh had recommended him to remain, scarcely venturing to move, however, until the sun had changed his course, and every mist that had obstructed his view had passed away.

He longed earnestly for night, close-curtained and secure ; but twilight and moonlight met together, and the noises of river and cataract rolled the more loudly under the mysterious shadows. More than once he started,

“ When the bittern sounds his drum,  
Booming from the sedgy shallow,”

and the hoot of the owl, and the quivering shriek of the night hawk ascended at intervals ; no singing birds were near his mountain retreat, but from a distant field came the creek of the rail, faint—very faint, but still distinct ; a sound harsh and unmusical, yet so connected with the homes and occupation of the husbandman, as to tell of human habitation rather than loneliness. Oh ! how he, who in the morning had dreaded the sound of a footstep, longed to hear the human voice—longed to hear some word of others ; and if a mocking sleep betrayed his senses, what visions rose of the past and future ! It seemed the longest, saddest day and night of his whole life ; events rose in chilling array before him : the mistakes of the past ! the fears of the future ! the more he thought over his position, the more certain became the knowledge that no matter how really hopeless and impracticable a plan might be, it would find supporters not only amongst the dreaming or self-interested portions of mankind, but amid the higher and better spirits of the world. At length he certainly heard some one ascending the mountain—path there was none ; but there sounded a step, and then a pause to ascertain where the foot could be next placed with security ; sometimes a

stone was dislodged and rolled down the almost perpendicular steep, and a muttered word would follow ; and at last he could distinguish the hard breathing which such efforts as ascending the face of a rock produces even in cragmen ; he drew his pistol and fixed his eyes upon the spot from whence the sound proceeded. At last a voice whispered, “ Captain—Maestro—whisth—wh-h-st !—are ye in it at all, or is it dead ye are, honey dear, with the fright and the storm ? Glory above ! an uncultivated waste, and unprofitable—not one holy ruin in sight ! Might dig to the foundation of the world in such a place as this, and neither find cross or coin, relic or rosary.”

“ Oh, Master Mat ! ” exclaimed the captain, grasping the schoolmaster’s hand eagerly, “ is it you ?—I am so glad to see you ! ”

“ But you can’t see me, captain, Sir. How could you in this darkness, and all the mad elements that have been raging round us—man’s elements, as I may say, in strife, and nature’s elements in strife also. Isn’t it shocking cruel ? ” inquired Master Mat, in a piteous tone of voice.

“ Sit down here by my side,” said Louis, seizing his hand, and forcing him down despite himself. “ Sit down here, I am very glad to see you ; and tell me at once what has occurred.”

“ Thank you, good Sir ! ” answered the simple teacher. “ I’m very happy to find you, but you never seemed to care to see me before. Nor did I expect it, for the people all said you were very cold, and had not much feeling for the poor, only striving to hold them back—which would be so best, certainly—so best, only they can’t think so.”

“ What hours of misery I have passed,” said the young man, hardly heeding the opinion formed of himself, “ dreading all things, and knowing nothing.”

“ Alas, alas ! ” cried the Domine, wringing his hands, “ the hour’s sorrow overwhelms the memory of the last ! All is vexation and woe ! ”

There was a long silence, uninterrupted save by the schoolmaster’s sighs and broken exclamations. Then Louis inquired if any evil had befallen Lawrence or Miss Ellen.

“ Gone—gone—vanished ! like the winter’s snow or the flower of the rock cistus, that’s a blossom and a heap of crumpled leaves within an hour. Gone, like a dream. My dear young lady ! And her letter—‘ Keep it,’ she said, ‘ for his own hand,’ meaning the dean’s. And I—oh ! it was such bewilderment—the hundreds of people, and the *Cuislean-i-Fhlionn*, where Flynn of the Golden Arm flung his treasures into the Sullane. I saw the coins glitter under the rolling waters, and it the turn of the moon—and the dean—but I sealed my lips. I was carried back to Spencer Court, and then she was gone ; and only I wrote the dean’s message, it would have been clean gone too. One said one thing, one another, but their speeches were all evil ; and but for my vow never to curse, I could have cursed them all ! ”

"But where is she?" demanded the young man. "Where is Miss Macdonnel?"

"Oh, that I but knew! Mavourneen deelish! where she was," he answered, weeping at the moment like a child at a new sorrow. "The way of it, by all I can hear, was that the soldiers were sent into Glen Flesh after yer honour; and it was thought that Mr. Edward Spenceer would have been able to turn their attention another way; but I think, as well as I can understand from one who says he knows (though many are not knowledgeable that think they are),—well, he says that all Mr. Spencer was able to do, was to keep the soldiers back, which he did for awhile; and sure you'd have been murdered entirely out and out, dear Sir, only for the contrivance of Master Lawrence. Oh, then! but he has a fine head, and would have made a great man at the books if he could but have been got to them, which he never could. Doubtless, Mr. Edward did his best, for the sake of the lady that Doyle let on, cares more for you than she does for her life, though she has no feeling for the cause—and no wonder!"

"But you tell me nothing clearly," said Louis, impatiently. "You tell me nothing clearly."

"I do not, dear, sure enough—I know that. God help and protect me! I know nothing clearly—and how can I tell it? I grow worse and worse; and the pain of it is, that though my head can't think, my heart *can* feel." And Louis' impatience was checked by the sympathy he felt for poor Matthew.

"Tell it me your own way: but if you can let me know where your old pupil, Miss Macdonnel, is—" he said, with affected calmness.

"Ah, I know you love her!" observed Matthew, in a half whisper. "I know you do—and I tell you how I know it: you think of her, instead of yourself. I was that way once, so I know the sign; and it's a painful knowledge, to feel that you forget all things for one who never thinks of you; it's very hard to bear, hard to construe how we bear it. I think, between you and me, that it's Lawrence who has put her out of the way, maybe not against her own will!—I'm not sure, but I think so—and yet Lawrence has a fine head, and he's a generous boy, too, in a way; when the soldiers couldn't be kep' from passing through the glen, even by God's elements, nor by the diversion of burning the cabins, which doesn't take much time to be sure, though it's great destruction, Murtoch let himself be picked up, and *prodded*, and set, and at last pretended to confess that it was somewhere near the Madam Macarthy castle you were on the hide; and one told me, he did it wonderful, acting a fool like life! 'cause you see the master trusted him to mind you; and the soldiers set off that way, and then they did it sure enough."

"Did what?" inquired the captain.

"Sure, I thought I told you, dear! out of revenge like, because they found neither you nor any living thing they cared for, they set fire to the old Madam's castle."

" You cannot surely mean that Lawrence's old castle is burnt. When? How?" inquired Louis.

" 'Deed do I; and if I could be glad of anything, it would just be that there's a fine bright gentleman who is as long making out things as poor Matthew! 'Deed is it burnt; and one who knows, said the party, on their way, met Abel Richards, who joined them under the pretence of keeping them from violence; and yet, worked and hinted in such a way, that half in diversion, but surely to give him revenge, they fired the old walls; and no one knows the treasure that was in them. I often told Mr. Lawrence this, and would have searched them; but you'd have thought, 'deed would you, that he'd have taken my life if I laid finger on a stone; and now, see what they're come to!'"

" Poor fellow, poor fellow!" groaned Louis. " But are you quite sure?"

" Too sure," persisted Matthew; " I crossed the stream and up the rocky pass towards old Madam Macarthy's castle, thinking she might be with her brother, and I walked up and up, wondering I did not see the castle. Oh, wisha! the fire had been there before me! the fine ancient old place to be destroyed for nothing; and but for the pillars of smoke that mounted to the heavens—poor half natural that I am!—I might have passed over the blackened stones without knowing where I was. Sorra a thing living about it; all fearing the soldiers, and hiding through the country; worse than foxes;—a lone pillar of smoke—no more than that—rising, rising up to the heavens, calling for judgment!"

" But Ellen—Miss Macdonnel!" exclaimed the captain, in a voice of suppressed agony, " could you learn nothing of her?—you could not have inquired."

" God love you, Sir—not inquired! no mother ever loved a sickly child better than I loved her—not inquired! not seek after Miss Ellen! She wasn't in it, that I know, or I should not be standing to the fore now; I'd have been with her, or for her somewhere through the country," replied Master Mat; " I had that much from her own brother."

" Then you saw Lawrence?" interrupted the captain, in a changed tone.

" I did, and I don't know what's come over him. I thought the burning of the castle that owned his name a thousand years, any way, would have driven him as good as mad, for the stones had done no harm; but there was no wealth nigh the place, nothing but the name to mark it to glory, and it was a fine ould ancient glory! seated like a grey ould proud eagle alone in the mountains; he took such pride out of the thick walls, and the bits of remnants of family grandeur that were just the leavings of the past, and his step, poor boy, had the sound of a king's when he crossed the coort-yard, or measured with a glance of his proud eye, the thickness and height of the one square tower." And the schoolmaster paused, and passed and repassed his hand across his

forehead, then in a feebler tone inquired, “Where was I, captain dear? Oh I thought the destroying of its nest would break the wild bird’s heart. When Doyle of the Cars told me where I would find him, I dreaded going near him, and nothing but the want I had to know all out about Miss Ellen, forced me; and the first word I said, intending to pacify him like, was, ‘Mr. Lawrence—Sir, I am sorry for your trouble,’ I never took off my hat to him before, seeing he had been my pupil, and but a boy; but then I did—because as he had no longer a castle, I thought I’d pay him the more respect.

“‘Trouble!’ he says, ‘why, Domine, I never had so little; I’m a free man now. It’s long since we had land, but we had our land mark—the walls bound me to the land—them,’ he went on, ‘and my grandmother’s grave—them two things. Trouble!—why, old Birch-wood, I’m like a lark,’ and he looked at me, white as marble and steady in himself, and his eyes burning like two lamps in the head of a corpse, and let a laugh, between a screech and a shout, from lips that seemed turned into stone. There was a look about him as if the life-blood had hardened in his veins: and he caught a grip of my wrist that’s left a mark on it for many a day—and he fixed his eyes on me, and says, ‘It was not to say *that* you came here.’

“‘It was not,’ I answered.

“‘What brought you?’ he says. ‘Go on,’ he says, ‘and seek for gold—or love—or faith—or any thing as hard to find; and thank God you trust no one.’

“‘No, Master Lawrence, the Lord forbid,’ I says, ‘I should do that last; I have a deal of trust in many; it’s half of one’s life to love and trust; only, if you’ll just tell me where Miss Ellen is, as I have a message for her from Dean Graves.’

“And it was then, Sir, he kindled like a brand, and asked (may the Lord above forgive his wicked thoughts) if I wanted to sell him, and if I was linked with her for his destruction, and your destruction!”

“He’s mad,” muttered the captain.

“That’s just it,” answered Matthew. “I can’t tell all he said; but it was without thought, poor fellow! and it gives me such a pain in the heart to think of it, that I’d rather not; but I was hurt—when I could get no satisfaction about Miss Ellen from him or the two strange men that were in his company (barring that she was safe). Oh! I forgot to tell you I knew that better from Doyle of the Cars, who told me his sister Biddy was ‘tending her, though he couldn’t tell where. I said, maybe more than I ought, considering his trouble, and the way he’s hunted—a reward over the country for you both, on the strength of Aby Richard’s word—and left him. But I hadn’t gone two yards, when the same hand that marked me, seized mine in kindness.

“‘Old master!’ he said ‘you won’t let black blood come between us; you won’t, will you? this was the hardest lesson you ever set me. Hard words, Matthew,’ he went on, ‘to spell or

read, and still harder to remember ; but I am almost mad, Domine ; I know you are to be trusted, though I cannot tell you for a few days (if my life should be so long) where Miss Macdonnel is ; ' he neither called her Ellen, nor sister ; ' but I do trust you, and thus I prove it.' And he directed me to where your honour was, and how I was to find you ; and tell you, that before daybreak you should have flight and light ; them were his words."

"Flight and light," repeated Louis, "then there will be a meeting somewhere. Well I know the destruction of his fortress will make him rush into any scheme to avenge the cruel injury ; and this was brought on by his desire to save me ; his knowledge that, unless the soldiers were decoyed from this place, I should really be sacrificed. I cannot withdraw from him now, I cannot do now as I intended."

He gathered together and tore into the smallest fragments the papers he had spent the greater part of the previous days in writing, and piled them before him.

"There is a live coal in my pipe, Sir, that will set fire to them if you wish," said the treasure-seeker, "and a handful of damp grass will hinder a flame."

"True," said Louis, "that was a wise thought."

"And so it was, for me," replied Master Matthew, "a wise thought ; and another, Sir, maybe is, that we can only undo what we do by the destruction of what cost so much trouble at first, this should make us careful ; you, captain, can't take out the words you have written on that innocent paper, but by burning them ; and often what is poured upon the heart is only crushed out by the coffin !"

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## CHAPTER XX.

### THE MIDNIGHT GATHERING.

THOSE who are acquainted with the locality of Glen Flesk know that the country which divides it from the dark pass of Keim-an-eigh and the Holy Lake and Island of Gougane Barra is among the wildest and most magnificent to be found in Ireland—consisting of lake, morass, and mountain upon mountain of every variety of size and form. In summer, the blossoms of the wild rush make the miles after miles of bog appear as if covered with the purest snow ; waving and undulating beneath every passing breeze, and contrasting with the patches of cultivation, and the rich deep brown of the peat which sends them forth in such extraordinary abundance. The mountains assault the clouds with their fierce and ragged peaks, or stand forth in bold magnificence against the clear blue sky. Many a dimpling rivulet, that creeps silently through the sedgy grass of the humble valleys, has dashed down the ravines of the Croghan, or the frowning wrinkles of the fierce Derrynasaggart, a wild, sparkling, brilliant, mimic

cataract, playing with the sunbeams, and laughing and leaping on its way. Oh, the brightness and purity of these gushing streams! softening the sternness, the ruggedness of nature in its wildest moods; companioning the solitudes; singing, where else there had been no music; refreshing and invigorating where, but for their influence, all would have been cold, and gray, and withered! There is freedom as well as freshness in the mountain river. whether it expands into the broad Shannon or the flowery-banked Lee, or wanders—no wider than a maiden's hand—amid rushes and wild thyme, in which the woodlark bathes, and the throstle stoops to drink, beneath the overshadowing of the pink and purple fox-glove, or under the blossom of the golden iris! We might throw down our glove in fearless challenge to the world, to show objects more lovely, or more sublime, than the bird can see while winging its way, straight as the flight of a silver arrow, from Gougane Barra to Glen Flesk.

But we have little now to do with the lovely or the sublime of inanimate nature; the events of the year 1822, particularly in the highlands of Cork and Kerry, permitted brief time for contemplation.

A few days and nights had passed since the schoolmaster and the high-born “friend of Irish liberty” had talked together in the heights of Glen Flesk, beneath the moonlight sky—the one incoherent and dreamy, but with a hopeful and gentle mind, his heart welling up kindly thoughts and tender feelings for every thing that breathed the breath of life; the other, with a crushed spirit, weary and worn, suffering even more from mental than bodily pain, disappointed with the past, apprehensive as to the future; his position and prospects in the world destroyed by his own act, and his cause unsuccessful! The most cheerful scenes, things that smile in sunshine, look bleak and cold beneath the moon; and while, for lack of thoughts that could be put into word, the schoolmaster disturbed many a turf, and peered under many a rock, his companion was stretched on the gray stone, his eyes fixed upon the heavens, or occasionally scanning the depths of the valley's shadows. But before morning Labbig Owen's bed was tenantless, and the raven returned to the blighted tree without fear of being disturbed.

A few days and nights had, as we have said, passed since then. Mr. Spencer was at Spencer Court, and Dean Graves had visited him more than once. The most minute inquiries had failed to elicit any information as to Ellen Macdonald's place of concealment; and he who had never suffered the existence of his cousin to disturb his mind, could now hardly think of anything but of her, whom he had never seen. She seemed to have become as great a source of anxiety to Lady Mary O'Brien, as to either Mr. Spencer or the dean; and the latter, much to his astonishment, received two inquiries from her ladyship in one day; the last containing an urgent entreaty, that the moment she was found, she (Lady Mary) might be informed thereof without loss of time,

although it was evident—she feared, or hoped, it was impossible to determine which—that Miss Macdonnel had left the country.

Mrs. Myler—the precise, cool, calculating Mrs. Myler—was really more distressed on Ellen's account than she had been from even the loss of her master and mistress.

It was piteous to see Master Mat, and to hear the wail of his reiterated inquiries: “Any news of Miss Ellen, dear? any news of Miss Ellen?”

The military had swept the country like a hurricane, and you might have ridden in the daytime from Cork to Bantry without seeing a man by the roadside or in the fields; the gaols were as full of the living as the church-yards of the dead; and yet proclamation followed proclamation offering rewards for “suspected persons,” and every dozen hours a detachment of troops rode over hill and valley—in nine cases out of ten, misled by false informations—seeking those they desired to capture, where they were not to be found. The weather seemed to have been unsettled by the storm that arrested the progress of the soldiers at the entrance to Glen Flask; and as the night approached, heavy masses of cloud gathered above the mountains that form such a magnificent amphitheatre around the vale of Gougane Barra; the high wind prevented these from remaining stationary as they accumulated; they heaved backwards and forwards around the rocks and peaks of the mountains, sometimes dispersing altogether and scudding away before the blast, at others, rolling into a pyramid or folding one over the other in various tints and forms. You endure a sensation of captivity as you stand in these hollows, surrounded by these highlands, which weighs upon the heart and imprisons the free will; on whichever side you look, escape seems impossible; you feel to want the wings, not of a dove, but of the eagle, to surmount the adamantine rocks which tower over you—rising as if unto the heavens.

In the deepest part of the deep bosom of this fair valley is a lake, renowned throughout Ireland for its healing powers, and midway in the lake is the Holy Island, whereon was built, in what we are prone to call the “Dark ages,” the famous hermitage of St. Fin Bar, who is said to have lived there previous to his founding the cathedral of Cork; this solemn and secluded spot is classed amongst the “holiest” places in Ireland, and has long been a favourite resort of devotees, in the confident expectation that the consecrated waters have power to heal all species of disease and even to avert death, making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk. Here, at stated times, the people assemble in immense crowds, bringing their sick children and ailing animals to bathe; and upon the neighbouring bushes and the wooden crosses which mark the humble graves, they hang fragments of clothes, or halters, or spangles, in proof that to the various animals, biped and quadruped, the lake has performed the anticipated miracle of making them whole. You may also pick up pieces of round stick notched and nicked; proving the number of prayers that had been said; tallies

of a foolish superstition which of late is, happily, passing away, and will be ere long a mere memory of the past.

The island is united to the main land by a sort of artificial causeway, and is nearly covered by the ruins of a chapel with its appurtenant buildings, and a large court or cloister, containing eight arched cells; it is believed there are as many cells beneath the turf as above it, that were used of old either as places of punishment or of penance. There are a number of noble ash trees, the relics of a forest, that once arrayed the hills wherever a tree could insert its roots; but the forests were so many covers for "disaffected men," and were reduced piece by piece until totally destroyed. It is impossible to conceive anything more sad or solitary than the valley, lake, and ruins:

"The mountain stream :  
Incumbent crags, and hills that over hills  
Arose on either hand :  
Heaps  
Of mountain wrecks, on either side thrown high."

The night was gathering in; and upon a fallen tree beside the holy well, where relics trembled from every bush and break, two men, armed with rifle and pistols, the latter concealed beneath their long coats, were seated, conversing in low, earnest voices. A detachment of the military had scoured the neighbourhood in the morning—unsuccessfully as usual; they had searched the cells, and disturbed the waters of the Holy Lake under the impression that arms had been thrown in there; but they had found nothing. And now, these two men conversed without casting one anxious glance towards the heights, from whence they could have been shot with the greatest ease by an indifferent marksman; they were quite safe, however; for every bush, crag, and fissure, sheltered a living guard, who would have sacrificed his life sooner than have suffered a hair of their heads to be disturbed by the breeze of a bullet.

For some time, they heeded neither the careering clouds, nor the gusts of wind that whistled round their heads; they heeded nothing of the external world, though their words had to do with storms and tempests—the storms and tempests of passion and revolt.

One of these was Lawrence Macarthy, the other, the "Captain" of Glen Flesk, whom Lawrence addressed by the name of Louis. After conversing together for some time, they arose, and seated themselves so that the ruins of the church sheltered them from the sudden rush of wind, that made strange, unearthly music, as it gushed down the mountains; a mighty, but invisible power—now whistling shrilly through the cells, then bending the trees; or rustling like perturbed spirits amid the broken walls; howling above the graves, and flinging itself upon the waters, that uprose against its efforts to insult them; now rolling a skull into the lake, then tossing the light tallies of many pious

pilgrims in rude sport upon the grass, as if they had been so many straws!

It was a fitful, and yet a terrible wind, holding nothing in reverence, triumphing over a prostrate cross, and mocking the crumbling ruins which seemed to shudder at its approach. Still, these men heeded it but little ; it was not as strong as the beating of their hearts, nor as agitating as the tumult within their bosoms ; it throbbed not as wildly as their heated brain. The lull would soon come ; and the valley, and island, and lake, sleep as gently in the moonlight, as if no storm had ever disturbed their repose ; but where—where should *they* find rest or safety ?

“ I see, Louis—I see see your trust in us is gone,” said Lawrence.

Louis made no reply.

“ It is not thus that others have served us,” persisted McCarthy. “ How often have we talked of those who considered death glorious in such a cause ; and how often have you said that the hope of such a death would reconcile you to all the trials of life.”

“ The hope of a patriot’s death might reconcile one to any personal evil,” replied Louis, “ but who would covet the continuance of a life that was to terminate with the reputation of the marauder or the assassin stamped indelibly upon it ? I would go to the scaffold in the cause of my country ; but I confess I shrink from being hanged like a dog for plunder.”

“ We have never been branded with that yet,” answered Lawrence, “ never in any instance has one of the thousands sworn to our cause throughout Ireland—though tens of thousands of them are starving — been guilty of robbery. When compelled to enforce our laws, by the obstinacy of those who take our lives by taking ‘ the means whereby we live,’ we never touch the gold for which they peril both soul and body. Ours,” he continued bitterly, “ ours is no common war : every species of justice has been denied us. Ours is not so much a war against England, as against those dastards of the soil, who deny us *the bit of land*—the *BIT OF LAND*, to be our own, without dread of slaving for another—*THE BIT OF LAND*, which the poor man can cultivate when maybe he has worked his twelve hours for his landlord, for that his wife and children can manage while he is absent. We want to be our own, a portion of the soil that was *ALL* our fathers ; not as a gift, but as the reward of labour—the crown of industry : and by all the winds of heaven we’ll have it, or the lives of those who keep their feet on our necks, and yet tell us we are free. What is life to me, Louis ? I ask you why I should care for life ? What is it to me—what charm has it for me, or such as I am, that I should hesitate to send this to the heart of those who now set a price upon that life at the base instigation of Abel Richards ? ”

“ It is of no use going over the ground again and again,” replied Louis, “ no use repeating that freedom is too high and too holy a thing to be attained by base, unworthy means ; that one

bold, brave struggle, boldly made, and sealed, it might be, with our blood, would command the sympathy and respect of the whole world, and that from that would spring the aid we now seek for in vain. But all shrink from the assassin. It is idle, Lawrence, to look at me thus. Every one who stabs in the dark, or fires from his concealment upon the unwary, IS AN ASSASSIN. No matter what his cause may be, he is the thing I have named ! I did my best to prepare you for a bold struggle, man to man ; to the last gasp of my existence I would fight for that : I would aid a guerilla warfare—it is the refuge of a mountain people for their defence ; but the stab in the dark ! the man shot in the very arms of his children, hundreds of miles away from the scene of action, for disobeying laws as arbitrary as those you complain of, to which he never gave his sanction, and which he was never bound to obey, is a thing that cries for vengeance and brings a curse instead of a blessing on our cause ! We shall never prosper as a people while we favour and conceal the assassin."

" It is well—it is well," muttered Macarthy ; " you have read with Ellen in the same book."

" That is what I most wished to speak with you about," replied Louis, rapidly. " From what the schoolmaster told me, I have no doubt you know where your sister is ; but why—why in her state of health, why under any circumstances is she concealed from her friends ? Why am I not worthy of the knowledge of her present dwelling ? "

" I do not want her to be concealed from her friends, I only want her to be hidden from our enemies—from *my* enemies, I suppose I should say," he added, after a pause, " for it need be only the poor, hunted, burnt-out Lawrence Macarthy who has enemies."

" No," was the reply, though in a crushed and broken-hearted tone, " no, my hand is on the plough as well as yours, and though I blame, I do not turn back ; we were trained in different schools, yet the end we would attain is the same ; if I should escape I will yet return when the contest becomes that for which, as I have said, a man is not ashamed to die in the field or on the scaffold—bold-faced rebellion against tyrants and violated treaties : yes, hand to hand, foot to foot, in plain, valley, or highland ; but no assassination ; no secret murders rising to curse our cause ; it is so against nature, so totally unproductive of good—for even if one is slain, five or six worse than he take his place."

" This is no time to talk of it," replied Lawrence, eager to turn his companion's attention to something else, " we are in a strait ; hunted on the one hand, and betrayed, or what is as bad, not assisted on the other ; you, though not an alien, cannot enter into my feelings, cannot understand those with which I saw the flames triumphing over the ruins of my ancestors' stronghold, which so long laughed to scorn the assaults of our natural enemies ; but it drives me mad to think of it ; in less than an hour the wisest and strongest will meet us here, and we must then decide either for one great effort, or a lull of some months' duration."

"And Ellen—your sister; I must know, Lawrence, where she is, and why, after your assurance that she regarded me with no common feelings, you have kept us asunder?"

Lawrence turned away; a deep flush, the flush of shame at his own falsehood, overspread his face, and for a moment he forgot that it could not be seen; full well he knew that to bind Louis more firmly to their cause, he had led him to believe that his passion for Ellen was returned.

"Women have strange fancies," he replied, "you are acquainted with the unfortunate scene at Spencer Court; but you do not know that all my arguments have failed to convince her that it would be her duty to deny having seen me; this, and this only, would be the way to meet the charge which Abel Richards has brought against me, and which has caused me to be honoured with an especial reward for my apprehension."

"But what has this to do with her disappearance?" said Louis.

"Are you so dull," answered Lawrence, "that you fail to perceive the necessity for her abode being concealed; if she, when discovered and questioned would, from a pining love of what she calls TRUTH, confess to my entrance and spoken words?"

"But surely you do not suspect that I would betray her concealment to those who now seek her so anxiously?" inquired Louis.

"No, certainly," was the reply.

"Then, Lawrence, you must tell me; I have a right to know; I feel this right; there are events and passages which, if not explained, would render death (if it overtook me) as unbearable as life is now. I cannot conceive Ellen guilty of duplicity; and yet why, after what you told me, should she not only avoid an interview, but return my letters? This must and *shall* be explained."

"Why so it shall, Sir," said Lawrence, turning abruptly round, for he had been scanning the hills first in one direction, then in another. "So it shall be," he continued, in an agitated voice, "but is this a time to think of 'passages and events' connected with a love tale and a pale girl? Is this a time, when our wretched country is in such a state, that the weight of a single hair would turn the scale, and sink us miles deeper in misery and despondency than we have yet endured? Is this a time to plague *me* with questions about a sister, if she deserve the name,—the child of a renegade mother, who had strength for neither love nor hate?"

"She was your mother also!" suggested Louis.

"She was," replied the Whiteboy, impatiently, "she was, and too well I know it; her pale Saxon blood has quivered in my veins, and cried mercy to my heart, when else I should have been an unalloyed Macarthy! But see, they are coming; now, Louis, whatever you may feel or think, show no mistrust of the future; we may urge them to lay by, to 'wait' for a little; but still hold out hope—CERTAINTY of future success."

Louis, who had risen, drew back a step.

"I only ask you to keep up the seeming—"

"Put why," interrupted Louis, "should I seem what I am not? Why draw them still deeper into danger, from which, for many we shall meet to-night, there is still a way of escape!"

"*Escape* to what?" inquired Macarthy, bitterly, "a merciful *escape* for a man to think of, to a family gaunt from starvation, turned from their bit of land to die by the roadside—to the gaol, prepared by a merciless agent, or as merciful tithe-proctor—to the gentleness of martial law: and you call that *escape*, for men made and fashioned like ourselves! Byrne of Inchageela told me they had one plan of which we should hear to-night, that would strike terror into our rulers; let us hear him, let us hear anything."

"Granted; but let us not stir up for the mere love of tumult, men, and such men, beyond the power of control; if we do, their blood, and the blood they spill, will cry against us hereafter!"

"And let it," exclaimed the reckless Lawrence, leaping forward to meet a group of strangers, who were advancing towards them, and upon whose tall muscular figures (not looking as large as they really were, from their noble proportions) a brief glimpse of moonlight was shining.

Louis paused a moment, and then, always infirm of purpose, with a deep sigh, followed young Macarthy.

The organisation of these midnight meetings had been marvelously skilful. Some few weeks previously, Louis had prided himself upon the completeness of a system which, though not originating with him, his ability and forethought had much improved. At the various passes leading down the mountain to the holy lake, sentinels were stationed, who gave and received the pass-words; and lest, notwithstanding these precautions, a wolf might by possibility enter into the fold, a strong body of men were assembled at the entrance of the causeway, to interchange with extraordinary rapidity the various signs both by lip and finger which made them known to each other. All the sentinels were placed, and this guard was set in far less time than we have taken to describe the scene; how they came, or where they came from, would have perplexed any looker on to tell; they seemed to spring forth from the rocks and valleys, or suddenly out of the bare earth itself; looking up at the mountains, a keen eye could, after a time, detect men moving downwards—not habited in the white shirt which they wore when the country was not so much on the *qui vive* as it then was, but in the gray frieze, concealing every light tint of colour; while some few had their faces blackened, and could be recognised by their most intimate friends only by their tone of voice.

It was impossible to conceive anything more wild and unearthly than the scene; the stupendous mountains girding the lake and the holy island, the lighter clouds scudding before the winds, while the more dense vapours disputed with the ministers of air, and heaved and lowered rather than dispersed; the moonlight marking, as if by magic, a pathway of liquid silver on the lake, while the remainder continued dark and billowy; the "lone"

island, interspersed with trees and ruins, so sacred and solitary in itself, yet made the trysting-place of the delegates of a people—unconquered, yet enslaved ; a brave, unsettled people, tempest-tost and torn, catching at straws, comprehending no one great principle, and yet alive to every small thought, and, in eagerness for the petty, losing sight of the great ; the most fierce and violent of the Celtic population, having nothing in common with their Saxon brethren, but the air breathed by their ancestors and themselves ; determined in nothing so much as their hatred of each other, a hatred, sometimes lulled by circumstances, but never, never extinguished. They came summoned by an invisible power, a power entering into every house, no matter what its position or polities might be, a power seeing all things though understanding nothing ; converting the country into one huge whispering gallery, compared to which the continental system of *espionage* is a piece of feeble mechanism. They came, on that night, foot-sore and weary, though firm and true to their unlawful purpose—far and fasting—they came from Dunkerron and Iveragh, from Muskerry, from West Carberry, and from the golden vale of fertile Limerick, and the glowing glens of Tipperary ; giants from Slievenamuck, and active, restless, black-eyed mountaineers from the fastnesses of Kerry. They came to hear, report, and act ; they came not as Irishmen are supposed to do, with riot and with brawl, but silently and firmly—their wives and mothers, their sisters and their children, all helpless and ignorant as the world would doom them to be, nerving their hearts and arms, and bidding them to be firm and fearless ; strengthening them with prayers, although the idea of their country's liberty extended not beyond the regaining of the “bit of land,” or the firing the houses of those who neglected the warnings of deep-dug pits at their doors, or the coffins in white chalk upon their windows. They came, on and on, covering the ancient graves as with a resurrection, and leaning on the tops of their staves beneath the ivied walls of their ruined temples. They were men and they came upon men's business ; there was neither woman nor child amongst their numbers ; there was no sound of horn, or shout, or waving flag, or music, or cry ; and but for the tramp of heavy feet, the whispers of the crowd would scarcely have disturbed the wild duck from its nest.

They had come ! all were assembled though not all seen ; it was more like the gathering of a spirit world ; and those who were partially shadowed by the waving branches of the trees, now in light, now in darkness, seemed flitting between earth and heaven. It would have been well for many that night, had they exchanged life for a quiet death among those peaceful graves.

Lawrence Macarthy, elevated upon a ruined wall, commenced calling over a rude sort of muster-roll of the leaders he expected to be present ; while Murtogh held aloft, to enable him to read, a huge torch of bogwood that cast a lurid and unequal glare upon the assembly, lighting up half a score of faces in the foreground, while the countenances of others were lost in darkness.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE PERIL AT GOUGANE BARRA.

THE names by which the leaders of Whiteboyism, in the different districts, were generally distinguished, might have excited smiles on any other occasion ; and as it was, the natural gaiety of the Irishman could not resist, for any length of time, some jesting, however faint and whispered. One was called " Moonshine," and answered " Here ! " in a deep, sonorous voice ; another was distinguished as " The Sword of Dunboy ;" another as " The Pike of Carberry ;" another as " Captain Starlight." One fellow, who looked as if he could breast a hurricane, and turn its course, when called by his own name, " Byrne of Inchageela," stood forward a tower of human strength, and tossed his arms in reply ; while, forgetting the supposed necessity for silence, a deep, stifled, but audible shout saluted him on all sides. Another, termed " The Limerick Rake," gave a whoop and a spin of his shillela as he vaulted forward over the graves ; while " The White Foot of Tipperary" strode like a Colossus across a ruined arch, his tall commanding figure, and square shoulders, standing out against the gray sky—and he, too, received the low and earnest commendation his countrymen are ever ready to bestow upon personal strength in man, and personal beauty in women. Many were summoned in Irish—wild mountaineers from the gloomy fastnesses of Kerry and the glens and rocks which gird the glorious bay of Bantry ; little, active, muscular fellows, some of them, with the flat bronzed faces of Cork ; others, whose physiognomy showed their Spanish origin, in gray coats and almost conical hats. One in particular, a species of nondescript, who looked half man half demon, was saluted as " The Leprechaun," with mingled but murmured laughter and congratulation. Stretching forth his long spectral arms, he tossed his hat into the air, while his hair streamed wildly about his shoulders, and slapped his breast, as if claiming the attribute of physical strength as well as of dexterity.

But no one was more heartily, though silently greeted—no one received with more distinction by Lawrence Macarthy himself, who paused to bid him welcome, and say, " Ever ready and willing for anything for the good of the sod"—than our old acquaintance who had danced the Irish jig on the road to Blarney. Then, he was the cringing, cowering, half-peasant, half-citizen ; his body bent, his eyes humbled towards the earth, his lips compressed, his tongue oiled, his ears open ; ready to smile and bow, to agree to all things, and do as little as possible ; looking stolid and stupid while listening, and yet comparing and gathering up information—though each item, taken alone, was as insignificant as a grain of sea-sand. Few could have recognised " Doyle of the Cars," as he stood, with his bold, fair brow, round which his hair curled

crispingly, his head thrown back, his foot advanced, and planted with the air of a man who says, “ I earned that compliment, and I will deserve it more.”

It was a singular, and when the distances the men had traversed were considered, a remarkable, fact, that only two of the many whose names were called gave no reply: when Lawrence demanded, “ The Rock of Skibbereen,” there was no answer; the call was repeated, and one of the watchers at the causeway replied, “ Wait a while, Sir.” But Lawrence was not one to wait, and in an impatient voice called again for the “ Rock of Skibbereen.”

“ Here, Sir,” replied the young voice of a boy; and the gray-coated sentry led forward a lad, who looked worn and pale. “ Here, Sir!” said the boy, again. “ Not me, Sir, but my father I’m come for.”

“ And where is he—and what does he mean, by sending a child, when we want a man?” exclaimed Macarthy.

“ Plaze yer honour, he didn’t send me,” was the reply.

“ Then how came you here?”

“ My mother, Sir; I’m the eldest and only boy, Sir, all she has in the world wide,” was the answer.

“ What is that to me?” said Lawrence, while the men gathered round and gazed upon the lad, who, though pale and quivering, looked stoutly and with unquailing eye into the face of their chief.

“ I don’t know, Sir, but my father was fond of ye, and with his last breath he taught me the passes, and he died in his bed, glory be to God! of an impression on his heart that crushed the life out of him, and had a fine berrin’ ere yesterday, and two priests and a friar at it! and if my mother had been able, Sir, she’d have come with me herself; but the strength has left her, and she has no power in her limbs. Only, if ye’d be plased to take me, Sir, I’d grow big and strong in the cause, and, maybe, be a good man yet, as yer honour knows my father was before me; a young heart can be as true, Sir, as an ould one. My mother was an O’Sulliyan, as well as my father,” continued the youth, drawing himself as proudly up in his rags as if they had been velvet robes. “ It’ll put new life into my mother, Sir, if ye’ll be plased to keep me on instead of my father.”

“ I’ll go bail for him,” said one. “ And I!” “ And I!” “ And all of us!” repeated a score of voices, moved by the boy’s earnestness and devotion. “ He’s of the right sort.” “ A fine ould ancient family, though now their place in the grave-yard is all the land they can call their own,” said another. “ As great a name as yer own, Macarthy,” added the next speaker from the crowd. “ His grandmother was a M’Geohegan,” exclaimed an old man, “ a great M’Geohegan, whose grandfather kept the Castle of Dunboy against the heretic Elizabeth, and stood by the powder barrel, with a live coal in his hand to blow up the garrison if there was any fear of treachery or surrender.”

“ And I’d do the same, plaze yer honour,” said the little fellow, looking brightly up, “ and herself into the bargain”

“Who?” inquired Doyle of the Cars, laying his hand on the boy’s head.

“Elizabeth herself—bad luck to her!” was the ready reply, and delivered with an earnestness that left no doubt of its sincerity.

“And would you be true?” asked Macarthy.

“Ov coarse he’ll be true,” said Doyle. “What else is left to him an’ his to be? Hadn’t his father a purty little farm, and wasn’t he able to pay his rent and live out ov of it, and have his Sunday coat and his Sunday hat, and his bit o’ pork of his own killing in the little tub, for friend or holiday? And didn’t Abel Richards”—it would be impossible to convey an idea of the yell of execration that followed this hated name—“didn’t he lend him ten pounds to restock his bit of land; and when the poor man would offer to return it, he’d ‘good fellow’ him, and bid him keep it till he’d ax it—the black hypocrite! And when did he ax it—when this boy’s mother was down in the fever, and his little girleen dead, and himself staggering with weakness from the same cause; and they were forced to sell the horse and the pig to pay him, and he bought them both himself; and they were back for the first time in the rent; and one trouble was lashed by black Aby into another. No poor man ever had enough of misfortune to content Abel Richards as long as he had a foot of land: until he saw him turned out of house and home he wasn’t content; then, indeed, he gave them advice and a small tract.” Another yell stronger than the first followed this.

“Never mind, boys!” said Lawrence, while he drew the child to his side, and wiped away the scalding tears that bathed his face, “never mind; Abel, and such as Abel, have furnished us with *men*; and you will be true, my little man?”

“God above knows I will!” rejoined the boy. “I’ll be fourteen next Martinmas, only I’m kept little with the hardship; but my heart’s big enough—just let me know that I’m in my father’s place and I’ll soon strengthen into a man!” There was an hurra at this, and it was decided that the young Whiteboy should be sworn in when the meeting was over.

The child was caressed with the tenderness of woman by strong hard-featured men. One good-natured fellow took off his waist-coat and wrapt it carefully round him to keep out the cold, and another plucking the wisp of straw from under his rough saddle, stuffed his own brogues with it, and fastened them by this means on the little shoeless orphan.

“Sit here, jewel, and listen to me!” said another. “I always gathers my own to hear the only knowledge I have to give them, God help me! the knowledge of what their parents suffered ever since the strangers came to it. Black Aby may be the worst in these parts, but he’s not the only one; as I say to my cousin who has so little heart with us because he has the good luck to live under the Master of Macroom, that never turned a poor man out because of the rent. Maybe, I say to him, it’s well to have a

tyrant at every ten mile, or else if they wor only half kind, let alone whole good, like the Master of Macroom, and the Dean (though he hasn't much in his power), or the Spencer Court ould gentleman (who's in his grave), and a few more, why we'd sit down content enough with the slavery."

"Never!" exclaimed Macarthy, "it is only slaves who say so."

"But it's being robbed and trampled on that makes us slaves, Sir," answered the man, "we're not born so, thank God! I remember when I could hold my head as high as any poor man in the country, and the ould landlord always promised me a renewal of my lease at the ould rent; but he died, and the green sod closed over his promise; and the young man never heeded such a place except when he wanted his rent, and raised us all to what I could not pay no more than others; and then I was distrained on—it's the old story over again—only a decent, sober man, as I was then, feels it most—there's no use talking! I had seven children and a dying wife when I was turned on the stones of the high road; and I went on my knees to ask the agent for one meal of the pratees I had sown and grown myself—one meal, for that one day, to save them from the hunger till I could get my wife into some poor neighbour's house—and he refused me; he refused me—with my children crying round me! twenty-four hours after that I became—what I am now." He stretched forth his long arms to heaven, held them in that position for a moment or two, then took his seat again on the tomb beside the orphan boy.

Another name was called; it was followed by intelligence that the "Roving Blade," had been seized by soldiers the previous evening, for being abroad after the hour prescribed by martial law.

After this ceremony was concluded, the delegates from different parts of the country gathered round Lawrence and Louis; then was brought to light by rapid questions and answers, the information obtained by the singular system of *espionnage*, in which women were employed as well as men; for, though the latter were seldom trusted with secrets, they were rendered the means of becoming acquainted with the secrets of those whose protection and wages they received. Each house, in each division, was noted down; the height, size, number of doors, windows, servants (if all the latter were "sworn in"); the religious and political tendencies of the inhabitants; their carelessly spoken words; the number and quality of their fire-arms, and where they were concealed; their personal appearance; the very positions of the seats they usually occupied in their own houses; whether they lived on their own property, or rented land of others. A kindly word of gratitude was given, if they were believed to be "good to the poor;" but all that seemed to demand inquiry was, whether they had, or had not, offended against Whiteboy laws, or evinced a disposition to do so: this appeared to be all the Whiteboys cared for. Every movement in the country was thoroughly known to the band, and at that time no telegraph was more rapid than their method of communicating one to another the secrets of every Protestant

and every gentleman's family throughout the country. Munster and Leinster were in their keeping. Information, in fact, upon every point, was obtained and transmitted—upon every point, except that which would have been the principal, with ordinary bandits; they knew and cared nothing for the plate, money, or jewels, of which their superiors might be possessed; they never thought of plunder, they thought only of working out their purpose!

As the night advanced, much conversation took place, particularly among the "elders," concerning their future plans; but as yet nothing had been developed to lead Lawrence to suspect, that the simultaneous rising he had hoped for was likely to take place. His immediate neighbours, though they deferred to him, were crushed in heart and spirit by the activity and power of the military; and Lawrence, despite himself, felt convinced that few of his band had the remotest idea of the broad principles of a revolution; this conviction cramped his energy; and even he hinted at the necessity of "waiting"—lying by—until the summer was over, and tarrying for the dark winter nights; while his auditors could not understand why—particularly those of far-off counties, who were indisposed to treat his opinions with the respect he experienced from the Whiteboys of the county of Cork, who were bound to him more than ever, now that he had been rendered homeless by his adherence to their cause. Every stone in Castle Macarthy had been as honoured and valued in the eyes and to the hearts of the peasantry of the immediate neighbourhood, as if they had been so many jewels of a crown. The men looked towards where Louis stood, the victim of contending feelings and emotions—eager for a confirmation of the hopes he had expressed to them at Kilcrea—when, after Macarthy had excited and inflamed their spirits by the power of his eloquence, he had strengthened them by the assurance of assistance of troops and means which he foolishly believed would come from a foreign country. Lawrence's sanguine temperament frequently led him to mislead himself and others; nor did he scruple to assert as truth what he wished to be true; and when he had called upon Louis to support his statements, at some of their smaller midnight meetings, and the "captain" had drawn back, the usual precipitancy of the Irish character made the "Whiteboys" construe caution into coldness; and now Louis felt that every eye was turned upon him, with a far different expression from that with which they had beamed at Kilcrea, where every hand was extended towards him, and every voice grew loud in his praise. They had expected him to do more than human being could accomplish; it was whispered that he had counselled restraint; that he was untrue to their cause; that but for him Abel Richards would not have escaped; there were, in short, abundant misrepresentations afloat among them, and Louis soon felt his position to be one of great difficulty, if not of actual danger. He was preparing to address them, but there were murmurs deep and loud, a heaving and swelling discontent, a

growling of human thunder, and a glare of angry eyes bent upon the pale, dignified, though slight young man, who, perfectly self-possessed, preserved the position he had chosen, elevated above the crowd, which gathered closer and closer about him. They glared upon him, and then they looked in the white light of the moon upon each other. All their respect for Lawrence Macarthy, all their trust in him, was needed to restrain "the boys of Carberry" from venting their disappointment in bitter reproaches against his friend ; they were eager to ascribe to any thing rather than to Saxon strength, the sudden and wide outspread of Saxon power, attended by its fiery beacons through the land.

Had they sinned their souls, and were they then to be told they must "wait ?" Had they been working at the midnight forge, hid away in the earths and cleft rocks of their native mountains ; or sending forth its rapid and mysterious fire-flakes over the lonely morass, which could only be trodden in safety by those who were familiar with its passes from childhood—to be told now, that they must "wait," as they had waited for centuries ? Had they concealed their rude instruments of "liberty" in caves and burrows, visiting them by stealth to be assured of their safety ; and were they to learn that they were fated to moulder and rust ? Was Lawrence Macarthy himself to remain insulted and unavenged, while the smoke of the stronghold of his ancestors still swept its dark pennon athwart the sky ?

Notwithstanding all they had heard, thought, felt, and endured, they unaccountably and suddenly, as the feeling comes upon a multitude, felt as omnipotent the power which belongs to it, when no opposing force is within sight. The greater number were inflamed by the "spirit of mountain dew," that had been pressed upon them by the glensmen—their solace at all times in the days of which we write. Many who came from a distance, incapable, as unwilling, to reason, triumphed in the consciousness of having destroyed some obnoxious person, who had outraged their laws, and neglected their warning. Their feelings and passions were brawling and rioting within them ; they had no defined idea of a struggle for their country—it was but a piecemeal effort to keep their bit of land. The military might for a time overrun the country, and burn and destroy ; they had often done so before ; their spirit rebounded, they did not understand what they were to "wait" for, when they had the power of shooting an enemy and burning a house. Such was the versatility of their natures, that, in their violence they became as elated as they had been but a moment before depressed. Strong hearts met strong hearts in Gougane Barra, and what was to hinder them from doing what they had before done ; they could not be worse off than they were ; were they not sworn to certain laws ; and what new cause had sprung up for telling them to "wait ?" Louis was not one of *them* ; they had never known who he was ; they could imagine no man even a well-wisher who did not whirl on with them through all things. Without a word being spoken, they decided

that the reports *were true*. And Louis was what an Irishman hates worse than enemy—a cold friend ; perhaps he was not even that ; they refused to hear him, and called for Macarthy ; some even yelled when Louis would have spoken.

“Have I deserved this?” he said to Macarthy, who now mounted the tomb on which Louis had previously stood alone ; “have I,” he continued, passionately, “have I, sacrificing all, as I have done, and anticipating the moment I may be called on for the last sacrifice a man can make—have I deserved this?”

“No,” was the prompt reply, and he twined his arm within the arm of Louis with an air of brotherly affection ; he could feel the young man’s heart springing against its imprisoning side, while his cheek grew crimson with agitation ; “No”—

“I want no man to defend me,” interrupted Louis, loudly, and unable to control himself, “I want no man to defend me ; I have done nothing to need defence ; I abandoned all to organise the revolt of a brave and injured people ; I trusted to the promises of others to assist in this, because I knew how little could be done without that aid, and I as well as others have been disappointed and deceived.”

“We have ourselves to the fore, ready and willing,” said the “Limerick Rake” stepping forward.

“And a great thing it is to have ; but not enough,” answered Louis, boldly, while Lawrence trembled for him, “not enough to rid the land of the proud invader, and eject a mass of the population, unhappily your bitter enemies, from their holdings.”

“Let each of us pick his man, and we’d soon be rid of them,” said the “Whitefoot of Tipperary.”

“By murder, not by war!” replied Louis, firmly.

There was a hush ; and Lawrence in an agony too deep for loud words, muttered ; “You will destroy yourself and me. Have you still to learn that they will fight—die—silently and bravely—but will not reason—cannot be thwarted ?”

“Murder,” repeated the viperous-looking “Leprechaun,” as he stretched out his long leathery arms and clutched and opened his bony fingers, as though it would have given him pleasure to tear Louis into pieces. “Murder, that’s a mighty hard word entirely, boys dear, and one that was never evened to us before—‘murder’ is it, enagh—don’t we *pisen rats*, and varmint, and lay traps for foxes, and ferret rabbits—by law too—law—law!—do ye hear me, boys? and ain’t we to try to get rid of worse yarmint without being called murderers—Oh! yah, mellay!—did I tramp fresh and fasting me ten good miles to be tould that it’s murder to kill an orangeman? Oh, boys dear, do ye hear me now? and that by a friend of the Macarthy; but he’s not the right sort of a Macarthy,” continued the long-armed drunkard, who could hardly stand, but was tossing to and fro ; “he’s not the right, ‘true Macarthy ; he came—you understand me—into the world—not wanted ; his mother was” what, was not permitted him to say, for Lawrence’s hands were on his throat, and then he threw him

from him as a dog flings away some disgusting thing which he loathes almost too much to destroy.

This turned the attention of the people, who felt indignant as Lawrence himself could feel; and if Murtogh had not been restrained, there is little doubt he would have given full loose to his natural propensity, and the Leprechaun would have been heard no more.

After the lapse of a few minutes, during which Louis had never moved, but stood with folded arms and firm unbending brow, Lawrence was again by his side: his temper relieved by the act of violence he had committed; ready to flatter and to soothe, to win and wile away the hearts which responded to the music of his voice. He was the agitator of the present without attempting to be the legislator of the future. His love for the faith of his fathers was an intense reality; and no man will ever get right into the Irish peasant's heart, with whom this is not the case; his handsome person—the winning sweetness of his smile—the subtlety of his wit, which, however rough, was still a diamond—his bursts of hope—his enthusiasm—his very want of the forethought which constitutes a successful revolutionist—his intense hatred, now more than ever deepened into malignity against Abel Richards, whose name was again the signal for a yell of execration that howled amid the mountains long after the voices that raised it had ceased to sound—feeling as *they* felt, sharing their afflictions and their injuries, he rapidly brought the meeting round as though it had never wavered from its faith in him;—and yet he had really said nothing to the purpose, had opened no new vista which even at a vast distance would have yielded the people at least a prospect; they were many of them houseless, homeless, proscribed, escaped from fever and famine to be hunted through their own land by fire and sword.

A shout as of triumph floated above the mountains by which they were surrounded. Lawrence grasped his companion's hand, and whispered, "Men who can so shout for freedom can surely regain Ireland for the Irish," and without waiting for reply, he invited "Byrne of Inchageela" to state what it was he had to propose to the meeting.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE INTRUDER AT MIDNIGHT.

THERE was a breathless silence while the huge "Munster man" heaved himself forward; and though he stood upon no elevation, he was taller than Lawrence, who kept his position on the tomb; his enormous proportions made the more slender figures of the two leaders appear like those of boys.

Byrne took off, first his hat, then his wig, which he must have worn because his father did so before him, for his hair was abundant, though somewhat frosted by time; he then looked

round with a sheepish look, throwing a sidling glance over the crowd, which now appeared distinctly; for several, following Murtogh's example, had kindled torches of bogwood, that, as the wind lulled, burnt steadily enough. He spoke in English, and "Doyle of the Cars" translated his words into Irish for the benefit of those who did not, as Master Mat would have said, understand "the *Vulgate*." He spoke slowly, as if resolved to curb his natural impetuosity.

"Boys," he said, "boys! I am no great hand at speech-making, though I believe it's pretty well known that I'm a good hand at the fist. Boys, what I have done is well understood by yez all. The blue wathers of my own lake could have informed (only they'd scorn it), ten years agone, where the process-server slept—who darkened my door a living man, and left it a dead one. He had his pistols and his *cutlash*, and above all, he was armed with the law at his back. I—I had THIS," and he held forth his clenched hand, that could have felled a Goliah; "these bones against his pistols, his *cutlash*, and his law. I never saw tithe-gatherer, taxman, or soldier, that would force me to turn my back."

"We believe all that," interrupted Lawrence, knowing, that if he got upon his feats of strength, there would be no termination to his harangue; "we know that, good Byrne; but the night is passing, and our friends have far to go."

"Young blood wants patience," answered the man. "Hours will pass, and friends will wait. But there's enough said; all know me, and all know Saint Columkill's and Pasthorini's prophecies, which are working round, glory be to the Lord! plain as the sun at noon-day. There's only a little management needful, to trap every one of our persecutors and their myrmidons. Why, look boys, it's asy, and natural, and it shows how a small light may kindle a great fire. Look now, all the men in Munster and Leinster couldn't have saved our *strange* captain's life last week, an' he lying wounded in Labbig Owcn's bed over there in Glen Flesk, but for the wisdom of Macarthy, and the 'cuteness' of Murtogh, the Macarthy's foster-brother. Murtogh's a jewel, so he is!" said Byrne, pressing his hand down upon Murtogh's head, with the fondness of a father for a child, though Murtogh staggered beneath the affectionate pressure. "Murtogh's a jewel! There was more than ye know of, wishful that the captain should be left to lie asy; and one who, maybe, afther all, will turn out nothing but a bird of two weathers, would have given his breath to save him. But nothing could turn the devil's pack from the devil's hunt; and what did Murtogh, wild as he looks—faix it's proud I'd be of ye, if ye wor my boy, Murtogh dear—but I've no boy now."

"No, poor man, God help you, you have not," exclaimed a sympathising voice, for the strong man remembered when he had two sons, who had been "sacrificed" to the offended laws of their country.

"Oh, to see the nature of him, and he such a giant!" exclaimed another.

"Mr. Byrne, Sir," said a third, "keep a good heart; for *every drop of blood* that was in their bodies we'll have a life yet."

"Thank yez all for yer mercy, God bless yez, ye'r the right sort any way," he replied, "only the wakeness comes over me mighty strong, so it does, when I think of them; sometimes I see 'em as plain as light—the rosy twins, sleeping on the white bosom of the mother who died, as ye all know, under the—" his emotions prevented his utterance, his huge features became convulsed, he struggled to speak; one of his friends handed him a noggin of whiskey, he drank it off, and then, apparently relieved, returned to the subject which the remembrance of his own sorrow had drawn him from. "Well, my friends (for friends yez are to every heart in trouble), well, what did he do, but he took the 'natural' on himself, the 'cutest lad in all Cork took the 'natural' on himself, and tumbled on before them just as a partridge or a lark (poor innocent birdeen) would do before a hound, just to 'tice it from its nest. Well, boys, he was the finest fool ye ever saw, and bore all the little innocent divarshin, such as prodding him with bagnetts and the like to make him jump and twist faces for their divarshin—most wonderful!"

"They'd have spitted me in earnest to make me spin like a cockchaffer once," put in Murtohg, "but for Mr. Spencer, God reward him, who has a heart to the poor, though he didn't know me from Adam."

"Well, the storm forced them to stop, and having written in their copies (they're larned men), that 'idleness is the root of all evil,' to keep their hand in, they set fire to two or three cabins, and Murtohg, one way or other, by seeming to encourage their going on in the glen, and letting on to have great fear if they turned the gray path (the mountain road where the Banshee of the Macarthys do be wandering alone), made them think that the scent they were on was wrong; he knew more than he'd let on, so they threatened to shoot him, and got him on his knees, and at last, dear, he confessed, that he'd guided a stranger (giving all the marks that the major's own man had tould him was on the descriptions—he's been one of us these three years and more), and, my darling, he tould how he'd took him as far as the corpse road, and left him there in the ould mill."

"And sure," added Murtohg, "it was de devil's bad luck both of us had to send dem dat road at all, at all; for when dey found noting in de mill, and see de square tower of de Macarthy a little way on, dey turned savage, and because (de Lord above knows it was in airnest I was den) I swore to dem he never sheltered dere good nor bad, and dat dere was noting in it but Molche Kavenagh and de bare walls, dey would not blive me, but purtended to tink we were still desaving dem—de tyrants of de

world! to destroy de fine ould place. Master Lawrence says he knew how it ud be from the first, but de Lord above knows I'd no notion dey'd have done dat; and when it was done, de night was come, and dey'd noting for it but to get back as fast as dey could to Macroom."

"A friend is better than a castle, new or old, any day," said Lawrence, "and if a hair of the head that has thought and risked so much for us, were but injured, nothing could efface the scandal that would have fallen on us. I should not now have had my friend by my side if the scoundrels had taken their course through the glen." Macarthy said this, in his usual, bold, frank tone; but Louis' eyes were suffused with tears; he rejoiced that the dim light prevented his emotion from being seen, and he whispered something of passionate gratitude and earnest regret.

Byrne recommenced his explanation which the few words of Lawrence had interrupted. "Now, boys, attend to me, draw round—that's it. We all know the character that the lakes of Inchageela and these mountains have got; well, dears! you know the pass of Keim-an-eigh; you know how the rocks stand up each side of the mountains, and how the stones grew big as they grew old; you know its twists and turns, and how the ancient holly and yew trees stand about, and the ivy makes hiding-places; you know, that when you get in you don't see ten yards afore ye the way to get out. Now boys, this is it; the morning afther next, I've reason to know, the cut-throat soldiers mean to scour the country, and here's a list of the gentlemen (and Black Aby among them) that's to meet 'em at the end of the pass;" there was a rush forward, every face was turned towards Byrne; countenances deeply marked by strong and vehement passions, throbbing with anxiety, were all upturned towards him. "I'll read my list in a minute, boys, as soon as ye'll hand me over one of them bog lights, for the sight isn't what it was in my ould eyes; but before I begin that, or go any further, so as to spread my plan before yez—how we'll belay them—tempt them—and set 'em and finish 'em, nor let one escape—give the ravens their prey, and thicken the mountain strames with the blood of our tyrants—I'd be just glad to know on yer faith an' yer hope of salvation if yer all book-sworn, in the face of God, man, and yer country? the true—free oath, which every man present doesn't subscribe to, we know how to make him. I ask ye again as yez shall answer before the Almighty at the last day, are yez all sworn, boys?"

But though Byrne spoke at the top of his voice he was answered by one less powerful, but more clear, and more distinct than his own, "No!"

It would be impossible to describe the sudden rush towards the spot, somewhat distant from that which the presence of Lawrence and Louis had made the centre of the crowd. The terrible sensation which agitated every one present—all seized with a desire as sudden as it was vehement to annihilate whoever had

intruded into their circle and secrets—was about to act, when Lawrence sprang from his elevated position, and paused for a moment, uncertain what to do. It was singular that though pressed closely in on every side, the stranger remained untouched; not a hand had yet rested on him on whom they glared so fiercely. Some whirled their shillelas, and not a few stooped for stones, but they did not so much as disturb the drapery of his cloak, and the placid look with which he regarded them, neither smiling nor frowning, proved either the most extraordinary self-possession, or a total ignorance of the danger in which he was placed. There was a native dignity, a moral purpose and power about the intruder which kept the men at bay; they drew closer and closer, still fierce and glaring, but offered him no violence. Doyle of the Cars being something below the middle size pushed one way and then another before he could see the stranger, and when he did, he clasped his hands and exclaimed,

“Ough, murder and glory! ‘tis his fetch that’s in it!—Och, murder, dead and alive, what ails my eyes! ”

Lawrence by this time stood before him—face to face. With the feeling natural to gentlemen—the one by education, the other by nature—they moved their hats.

“It is very singular—very unaccountable, Sir,” said Lawrence, “forcing yourself into a—a—a—private meeting as a spy.”

“Oh, no, masther! not that,” interrupted Doyle. “Mister Lawrence, Sir, he’s not that; ye don’t know him—he’s one of ourselves for all his words; I’ll let ye take my life on my knees if he isn’t. Grass greens, Sir, and the cloth cloak! Och! then every hour’s bad luck to the night, that ye can’t see the colour of it, that would spake for itself.”

This rhapsody was lost on Lawrence, who fronted the stranger, while he seemed astonished at his reception. “Who are you, Sir?” demanded Macarthy.

“I question your right to inquire,” was the cool reply; “but though I came here secretly, I had no intention to learn what you did not wish to communicate, and resolved to make myself known before the meeting dispersed. I am Mr. Spencer of Spencer Court, a stranger in person, but not in heart. I need not have spoken when I did, if I had wished to deceive you.”

There was something so natural and straightforward in this, that the people looked at each other, conscious that the new master of Spencer Court could know nothing of the danger he encountered, and perplexed in different degrees according to their feelings and capacities, as to what his motive could be; the rumours afloat were such as induced them to consider him their friend; and the secret information received from the servants he had engaged at Cork, had been equally satisfactory. Still he had outraged their law; unknown, unsworn, he had stolen in among them. He might go forth and destroy even the forlorn hope that remained—exhibit their danger to the gentry doomed to perish in the pass of Keim-an-eigh.

"I came here for a double purpose," resumed Edward Spencer.

"I said he came to join us!" exclaimed Doyle, springing high into the air. "I knew it. Wasn't he hand and glove with Father Jasper? Didn't he send twenty guineas for the building of the new chapel? Didn't he want to turn the banks of the Lee—God bless it!—into cottage gardens? Success! we're in for it now, boys. Didn't he give me sister Biddy a bit of yallah goold on board the ship, for setting her curse on Black Aby? There's glory for ould Ireland!"

This was a species of "aside," delivered first to one, then to another, who heard and did not hear, for the most deep attention followed the words of Edward Spencer, who continued—"A double purpose—to reason with you on the ruin that awaits your pursuance of this unlawful system; and to deliver a letter to a person, a gentleman of the name of Louis, who, unfortunately, I believe, is this night among you."

The Irish are an unaccountable people: if unhappily prone to consider "the wild justice of revenge," the only justice they can enjoy, they are as much given to a wild generosity, which bursts forth even in their darkest times. There was that which went at once to the hearts of many, in a gentleman, a man of importance and standing in the country, coming among them, declaring himself as not of their opinions, and setting himself to oppose them, unarmed, and yet evincing no symptom of terror or even of anxiety.

"By what means did you get here, Sir?" inquired Lawrence.

"By means of your pass-words—pronounced," he added, "as well as I could manage them."

"And who instructed you in these?"

"*That* I shall certainly not tell you."

"There's an informer somewhere," growled Byrne.

"Are you armed, Sir?" persisted Lawrence, evidently much astonished.

Edward unclaspt his cloak, which fell from his shoulders, as if to prove the truth of his words.

"No! why should I come armed? I came to Ireland determined to love, not fear you; to come armed, would argue not only a mistrust that you do not deserve, but exceeding folly. What could the arms of one man do against a multitude? I came as a friend, to advise and to see, if I can, the person to whom this letter is addressed."

"Louis!" said Lawrence, "Louis!" But "the captain" had disappeared. Lawrence desired several to seek him, but he could not be found. "If you intrust the letter to me I will certainly give it to him," said Macarthy.

Edward replied that was impossible. But Byrne started forward, and with the bitterest and most fearful curse which the Irish language is capable of forging in its might of expression, he inquired what they meant? "Take the letter from him, boys.

How do we know that he is Mr. Spencer? How do we know who or what may be behind him?" He spoke in Irish, tossing his arms about, and looking amid the flame and smoke and flickering of the torches, kindled to gaze upon the stranger, more like the demon of wild mystery than a living man. "I tell you we have been betrayed by strange foxes. Are you all mad to stand looking at a Saxon as if he were a saint? Let him hang upon a tree, the first of those whose blood must spill before the moon changes. Are ye mad, boys? Hasn't he heard my words, and would you let him go to tell them over the hills and ring a warning? Macarthy, remember your burnt ruins; remember what your father suffered through the Saxons of Spencer Court; remember the two funerals; remember the dying words of Madam Macarthy."

Again the bad passions of the people were in the ascendant—again they changed; and as the first generous impulse of his better nature shrunk away from Lawrence Macarthy's heart, he forgot himself, and looked with a dark suspicion upon the young Englishman, whose deep-seated and fervent romance had urged him to an act of well-intentioned bravery.

Edward heard for the first time the "barbarous language"—as it is falsely and insultingly called, by those who do not understand its pathos or its power—spoken boldly by a Celt, unrestrained and full of energy; but he had no idea of its import, for Byrne's head was turned away, until his eye, quick at reading the human countenance, caught the changed expression of every face around him. Distrust had taken the place of curiosity and interest. Against Byrne's appeal, Doyle protested vehemently; he repeated what he had said in English, in his native tongue with more than his native eloquence; enlarging upon everything he had before stated, and affirming in the very teeth of Mr. Spencer's own denial, that he was *one of them*; and now many whose prejudices had gone with Byrne, had their hearts recalled by Doyle, and muttered expressions of admiration were mingled with one or two good wishes; while Lawrence, hating the race, could hardly understand the feeling of respect with which he gazed upon the man. They were all tempest-tossed; the only person really unmoved amongst them being him whose life hung upon a hair—upon less—the wavering will of the very wildest impulses.

"Considering," said Mr. Spencer, addressing Lawrence, "what I seem to have perilled by coming among you, if I read these angry countenances aright, I hope you will at least hear what I came to say."

"There is nothing you, or one of your name, could say, Sir," replied Lawrence, fully awake to, and carried on by the popular feeling, "would affect me, or any here. We know the bent of English words, and the value of English promises. Without being one of us, you become possessed of our signs, have stolen in among us, and learned our secrets. I am certain I speak the feeling of every man within the circuit of the Holy Island, when I offer you the alternative of—taking our oath, or—" Lawrence paused;

daring as he was, he lacked the courage to speak the alternative on which he had at the moment determined.

“Or what, Sir?” inquired Edward, and his cheek perhaps changed colour. “Will you be so good as to name the condition you annex to this most extraordinary proposal to one who came among Irishmen trusting to their generosity, and proving that trust *as I have proved it?*”

“The condition my friend proposed,” said Louis, who reappeared as suddenly as he had vanished, and now stood beside Macarthy with an air and carriage as quiet and collected as if he too were a Saxon, “is this—that if you do not immediately accept our oath, you must submit to be taken from hence blindfold, to where you will be kept in perfect safety, until it accords with *our* safety to set you at liberty. It is a measure we sincerely regret; but considering what you have heard, you yourself must see we have no alternative.”

At the first sound of his voice, Edward started; but not only was Louis shrouded in the large coarse frieze coat of the peasantry, but his face was covered with black crape.

“You were quite right,” continued the captain, “in trusting to hearts that beat with every generous sentiment towards the generous. We shall at once convince you that, however we may disagree, we treat honourable men with honour. It is impossible to misunderstand your motive in coming among us as you have done; but let me hope that, sympathising as we know you do, with the wrongs and sorrows of (I use your own words) ‘the country of your adoption,’ you will not hesitate to enroll yourself among those who struggle for her liberty—who live in the hope that they may yet see her great and free!”

“It is quite needless, Sir, to propose any such alternative to me,” was the proud reply. “If you had given me a choice between the enrolling myself as a member of an illegal body and death, of course I should have chosen the latter. I came here——”

“We know that, Sir,” said Louis; “you certainly did come here, and doubtless, at this moment, you, and all within the circuit of this holy lake, think you were exceedingly foolish to have done so.” This little sally, pronounced in a manner totally different from the captain’s usual tone, coupled with his former words, not only re-established him in the people’s favour, but got them on his side.

“The gentleman meant no harm”—“He’s a stranger in earnest”—“His uncle took the sharpness off poverty for ten miles round Spencer Court”—“Those who came to him fasting, left him full”—“May be, he’ll bring luck to the country yet.” These and such like sentences were whispered about; and while Byrne, still keeping to his native tongue, said, he didn’t care what came of the pale-faced Saxon, if he was put safe away until the net was spread and the game finished, Doyle fell at Edward’s feet, twisted his arms around his knees, and entreated him in the most moving terms to join them.

"I'm the only boy in it his honour knows," said the poor fellow, "and when he gets out and meets me in the streets of Cork, what 'ud hinder him to turn me over, as asy as the leaf of a book, to the law; but I know his principles, and sure something not right crossed him an' he on the road here, for I'd give forty oaths he came to join us, and if you'll only let me stop with him till morning, I'll go bail he'll come round; it's nothing but the walking over crossed hazel or the like that's bothered him entirely. Arrah! what would bring an unarmed man into the thick of us, only to join? Ye don't understand gentlemen as I do, that have the driving of 'em from one year's end to another; just let me have the talking to him."

Louis claimed his letter, which Edward would not give until he saw a mark on his left wrist. He addressed a few words to him and Macarthy, which knelled in their ears in after hours.

"I cannot and will not leave this spot," he said, "without calling upon you, whose real names and positions are unknown to me, but whom I have learned in this brief time to consider gifted with power, and educated far better than those by whom you are surrounded, to pause before you plunge this multitude into deeper crime—crime fruitless only in the sin and additional misery it brings upon those who trust you, as their leaders. This is not the way to improve their condition, to overcome oppression, to bring conviction that they deserve liberty; the blood they shed will be your bitterest punishment."

Lawrence was listening with forced coolness, but Louis made a signal to Murtogh, who, with another glensman, one on each side, seized Mr. Spencer's arms, while a third bandaged his eyes. He protested against this violence; but no reply was offered; though as he proceeded through the crowd many a murmured blessing reached his ear mingled with the heavy breathings of the multitude. "He's a brave gentleman, God bless him!"—"Don't be afraid, Sir, God mark ye to grace, if it's no sin to say it." Despite the darkness he soon perceived he had quitted the island without even the companionship of his friend Doyle.

The oath, so secret and so fearful, to spare no kin—to take no plunder—to obey when called on—to ask no questions—to yield the living body and the workings of the immortal mind entirely to the guidance of others—was generally administered, not at those great meetings, but by numbers of armed men, who visited the cottages and farmhouses in the various counties at midnight: men who, if the inhabitants were unwilling to join them, forced them to do so by threats of death and burning. But this was a great occasion; they knew that if they failed in the blockade of the pass of Keim-an-eigh, they were all dead men! If they succeeded, not only, they thought, should they get rid of the most obnoxious men of the county, but strike a panic through the country, that would make the walls of Dublin Castle tremble!

The orphan boy was received among them, and plucking the wooden crosses from the graves on which they knelt, with that

mingling of religious enthusiasm that blends itself with an Irish peasant's every thought and action—amid the flickering of half-extinguished torches, and beneath the shadow of gray trees, and still more venerable cloisters—they swore again what they had sworn before—to be true and secret, firm and united, in their next great effort. And the gray light of morning, as it triumphed over the mountains, met many returning from their last meeting at Gougane Barra !

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### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### THE MOUNTAIN PRISON.

EDWARD SPENCER did not know enough of Irish miles to calculate distances, but he knew he had walked a long way before he was requested to mount a pony, upon which he ascended to a considerable height, and then he was told he must walk again, as the “baste” could go no further. The men conversed together in Irish ; but occasionally they spoke to Mr. Spencer, endeavouring, with national tact, to convince him, that being prevented seeing his way, was the most fortunate thing that could have happened to him.

“ Well, Jem, I’d thank God I couldn’t see my way such a night as this ! and nothing but rock on the one side, and the rowling water on the other. Well, the baste is a jewel ! How beautiful he stept that. Bedad, Sir, if ye had been left the sight of yer eyes, ye’d have broke yer neck long ago ; for, like all strangers, you’d have been guiding the baste, instead of letting it guide you.”

Edward endeavoured to draw them into conversation about the meeting at Gougane Barra, but in vain ; nor could all his ingenuity enable him to discover the names of their leaders. “ They call them both captains ; one ‘ the long captain,’ and the other, ‘ the strong captain,’ one ‘ the fair captain,’ the other ‘ the dark captain.’ ”

“ Had they no other names ? ”

“ Maybe they had, maybe they hadn’t.”

“ One was called Louis,” Mr. Spencer said.

“ Oh, maybe so. They had, he knew, sometimes three different names on a Christian, and surely they were too much for any man.”

Mr. Spencer was no adept at cross-questioning ; and had, moreover, a sort of moral scruple about making people tell falsehoods when he found them bent on not telling the truth. This, more than aught else, checked the conversation : but had he continued his inquiries, his guides would have found no difficulty in replying. The keen mountain air, as the morning broke, made him feel hungry ; in answer to a question as to where they were to breakfast, they replied by pressing on him a glass of whiskey, and were much astonished at his refusing it.

After a wearisome ascent, during which he was most carefully guided—lifted over stones and rivulets, and cared for as tenderly by the mountaineers, as if he had been a child—they came to a sudden pause. There was an increased jabbering of Irish ; a whispering, and calling, and hallooing, followed by a loud knocking at a gate or door, apparently with a stone ; then more talk, and then he was led with considerable caution and warning over a bridge, evidently much out of repair. He heard the dash and the foam of the torrent beneath ; and more than once a stone rolled off, and fell into the water with a sound like the report of a pistol. At last the change of atmosphere informed him that he stood beneath a roof—warm peat smoke wreathing round him. Here there was another pause, another consultation, and the soft tones of more than one woman's voice mingled with the harsher tongues of the men ; he hoped every moment that his eyes would have been unbandaged, but they were not. There was a noise on some stairs, and much movement over his head, and whisperings both in Irish and English ; and once or twice a low tittering laugh, which somehow made the sensitive Englishman think they were laughing at him. It was the light breezy laugh of a young woman, and *that* made it worse. After a little more delay, he was guided up a spiral stone staircase, feeling the rugged and broken walls as he went ; then he entered a chamber so low that he could not stand upright ; and the next moment his eyes were uncovered. There was not light enough to dazzle him, certainly ; and what there was streamed through a slit-like window, which he afterwards found commanded a view of a sort of lawn—once, perhaps, a court-yard—and the ruins of a terrace-walk, where fallen stones, weeds, and flowers mingled together. This walk terminated at the commencement of a morass, deepened into pools of water, out of which sprung up huge bullrushes and wild rampant marsh flowers ; and beyond, a lake lay like a sluggard, round the base of an abrupt mountain, upon whose bare and rugged side not a single blade of grass was visible—nothing but lumps of stern, gray granite to vary its monotony. He could not see the bridge he had passed, nor anything that was not the very reality, or type, of desolation. The room had a circular cell-like roof, which, like the floor and walls, was of rudely hewn stone. There was a wide fire-place, where the ashes of a turf fire still smouldered, a table, a stool, and chair ; and a quantity of clean straw was heaped in a corner, over which some lengths of dark-gray frieze, such as women's cloaks are made of, were spread. It was evident that the room had been recently occupied, from the crumbs that were scattered on the floor and on the table.

“ Yer honour will be as gay as a lark here, when once ye get used to it,” said a long-armed, long-necked, red-headed, flat-faced brogueanee, who seemed determined to act both seneschal and gaoler. “ There's a mighty fine view entirely when the day do be clear enough for yer honour to see it. Fine shooting over that mountain, Sir, when a body has a gun, and there's any birds

on it. And faith, as to the lake, sorra a finer handful of wather in all Ireland for fish of all kinds, until lately, Sir, not more nor a hundred years ago, when they all died."

" And are there no fish in it now ? "

" No, Sir, not to say what a Christian would ate, nothing but *sarpints*, Sir,—that wor."

" What do you mean by 'that were' ? "

" Oh, murder ! sure I thought yer honour was a grate hand intirely at the English ; but do ye know, Sir," and he placed his shoulder against the fire-place, and crossed one foot over the other with the determined 'lounge' of a prodigious talker, " that my father, who was shipwrack'd in a place, they call it by the name of Anglesay, tould us, that but for their pride, the English would be forced to come to us to larn English ; every word they bring so stiff and so slow out of their head, not one bit glib on the tongue—and no grammar ! "

" Indeed ! " ejaculated Mr. Spencer, sinking into the chair, which creaked beneath his weight ; he was too fatigued and too much occupied with thoughts of the past night to feel much amused at the fellow's oddity and impudence.

" Faix, ay ; my mother was a schoolmaster's daughter that had Latin, so my father ought to know. There's nothing but grate walloping eels in the poor lake now ; God help us ! there's none of us know what's before us ! to see beautiful wather like that, tossified with them nasty *sarpints*."

" Serpents," repeated Edward, " surely there are no serpents in Ireland."

" Whist, Sir ! they don't like to be called that, Sir, because Saint Pathrick, glory to him ! changed everyone of them into eels ; that's it, and took their bits of stings out of their mouths ; but I can't abide 'em, that's all that's in it, nor never could."

" Can I get any breakfast here ? " inquired Edward.

" See that now, Sir ! they're getting it, yer honour ; if you'd only taken yer morning like the rest of us, you wouldn't feel the want of ating at all, at all ; its wonderful how a glass of whiskey puts the hunger off a man."

" The very reason you should not take it," said Mr. Spencer, gravely.

" Maybe we wouldn't, Sir, if we'd anything else to take ; but we get that for nothing, or the next thing to it."

" I should say that nearly every man last night had taken his 'morning,' and his 'evening' too," observed Edward.

" I wouldn't wonder, Sir, if they had."

" But surely men in that state are not fit to judge for themselves."

" Faix, yer honour may say that ; devil a bit of judgment we want ; only the spirit, Sir, that's it."

" You do not seem to want that in any sense of the term."

" Why then long life to yer honour for yer good word."

" But I should like to see your reason called as much into

action as your spirit," said Edward, who faint and weary as he was, had the interest of the people too much at heart to let the slightest opportunity of awakening their reason pass without his word of advice or observation. "I should like to see your reason called into action as much as your spirit, and your conscience left to itself."

"A—bub—bub—boo! yer honour, *that* would never do, what would Father Flood say to that! Sure the greatest comfort we have in life is, that the priest (God bless him) takes care of that for us; faith, I'd be long sorry to have my conscience bothering the life out of me at every hand's turn, and not knowing what to do to keep it asy."

"Well, but—" said Edward, anxious to obtain as clear an insight as possible into Irish opinions on this head, but the seneschal was not to be caught.

"I ax yer honour's pardon, but maybe I might as well go and see what the ould woman's doing to brake yer honour's fast! there's not much in this wild place to be had for love, and nothing for money;" and so saying, his gaoler departed, and as he closed the door after him, Mr. Spencer perceived that a rude hasp dangled from it, which he afterwards heard him fasten outside.

The room was not more than ten feet by six, rugged and comfortless; he felt so exceedingly weary, that after endeavouring to pace up and down once or twice, which he was obliged to do with his head bent upon his chest, he laid down on the heap of straw, and delivered himself up to a train of moody reflections. Fear for his personal safety had never disturbed his mind but once, and with the feeling of a generous nature he reproached himself for it; he was not in the least degree aware of the danger he had run; trusting as he did so entirely in the faith and strength of Irish generosity, he could have slept as calmly in the unnameable stronghold, amid the mountains where he now was, almost as calmly as in his own comfortable mansion in Berkshire, but for the sad beatings of his heart from a far different cause.

His chivalrous trust in the people remained despite all he had heard and seen, and certainly this confidence was not misplaced.

It had been known within twenty-four hours, throughout the country that Mr. Spencer was at Spencer Court, and would neither arm his servants nor bolt his doors; and this was worth a guard of fifty soldiers to him, at the very least. He had learnt how very differently the law was administered in Ireland from what it was in England; that, in fact, it was everywhere one-sided; that it seemed to have been devised not for the protection of the weak against the strong, but as supplying augmented power to the oppressor. Thus he became wholly puzzled, not only how to act, but how to think. Yet he had in a few hours made astonishing progress in the heart of Mrs. Myler, who succeeded in interesting him still more for Ellen Macdonnel, whose

disappearance caused her more tears than she had shed during the whole of her previous life.

Edward was in the midst of a chaos of thoughts and speculations, hopes, fears, and a very great degree of perplexity by finding how impossible it was for him to act with the gentlemen of the country as they evidently expected, when he received a second mysterious letter from Lady Mary O'Brien. This informed him that the friend whose "life was dearer to her than her own" had escaped from the peril of Glen Flesk, only she feared to rush into one much greater; that the man upon whom she could depend to convey the letter she inclosed to "Louis" was nowhere to be found; and that unless he received this letter the night of the morning on which it should be placed in Edward's hands, she knew it would be too late; that he could discover who would safely deliver it by saying to any one about him, one of the new servants for instance who accompanied him from Cork, "Is it day yet?" and if the answer was "The light shines," the person might be trusted to take her letter between the hours of half-past nine and half-past ten to the Holy Island in the Lake of Gougane Barra and deliver it as directed; convincing him on his return that he had done so, by describing a peculiar mark which "Louis" had upon his left wrist; the pass-words to admit him across the Causeway, she added, the man would most likely know, as they were all sworn in; but in case he should not, he must say, "Which is swiftest?" the reply would be "The hawk." Again and again Lady Mary implored Mr. Spencer to see that this, her earnest and deep request should be executed for her, true and faithfully; she trusted him, and she felt assured she might do so. The time for explanation would come hereafter; all was in the hands of Providence; but she prayed that if he served her faithfully in this, he might never need aid in his time of difficulty and danger.

Edward had a great desire to witness a midnight meeting of the White-boys, and a still greater to see face to face the man whom he could not but consider his rival. The whole mystery of Lady Mary's part had been most singularly sustained, and Edward Spencer was not without hope that he should obtain from "Louis" the explanation which under existing circumstances he could not ask from her. Urged by jealousy, curiosity, and a restless undefined sort of heroism, that frequently tempts men into danger simply because it is danger, he suddenly resolved to do Lady Mary's bidding himself—engaging the companionship of a boy to show him the way to the Holy Island. The result was his captivity; with an accumulation of doubt and jealousy almost too much to endure, and the torturing knowledge that some awful danger hung over the gentlemen who had been his companions, and which he could see no means of averting. After he had been alone for a few minutes, he felt so feverish that he longed for a glass of water, and could hardly help smiling at his own absurdity when he found himself looking

for the bell to ring for it ; he was not, however, kept long waiting, for the seneschal made his appearance, with a plate of smoking stirabout in one hand, and a wooden noggin of milk in the other ; having laid this on the table, he descended, quickly returning with the water Edward had requested and a bottle of whiskey, some of which he declared was necessary to " kill the insects," which would otherwise keep dancing alive down his throat. Then, another mountaineer made his appearance more wild-looking and uncouth than the first, his hair of a deeper red, flowing over his shoulders, while his eyes wandered about Edward as if he had never seen a civilised creature before ; he brought some boiled eggs and a broiled salt herring swimming in butter, and soon after, much to Edward's astonishment, a very small china teapot sufficiently beautiful in its ugliness to constitute the gem of a maiden lady's china closet, a cup and saucer of the same material, and a cream jug and basin of the coarsest delf.

" Shall I go or stay, yer honour ?" inquired the head warden, resuming his old position.

" Have you breakfasted ? "

" This is Friday, Sir, and besides that, I've a little penance on myself that hinders my breaking my fast until late in the day."

" But the whiskey ?" said Edward.

" Oh sure it isn't counting that anything I'd be, that's no more than a sup of water ; why the Council of Trint itself put no fast on the whiskey. Take another egg, yer honour, sure it isn't laving off with two eggs you'd be, and them sups of wake thrash that the women are so fond of ; well there's three of the boys gone off to look for a bit of proper dinner for yer honour, for it's himself would go mad if he thought ye wanted for anything while ye're visiting, Sir."

" Can you let me have pen and ink after you have removed these things ? "

" Is it pin and ink ? Well I suppose it's as good as forty years since the likes of that has been seen here, and if there was itself," added the fellow, significantly, " there's no post-office in these parts and *no postman*."

" Can you lend me a book ? "

" Is it a book ? I dare say Miss Anne has books, if I could make her understand what I want ; but she hasn't heard a sound these thirty years and more, glory be to God ! "

" Miss Anne ! Was that Miss Anne who laughed so rudely when I came here first ? "

" Oh, the sorrow a bit. She laugh ! not she, poor craythur—laugh, we'd as soon expect to see a corpse laugh ! how she lives at all up in this could lonely spot, hardly seein' a *stim* of light, never hearin' a sound, and not, maybe, spakin' ten words in ten weeks, is what I never could come under."

" And who is Miss Anne ?" inquired Mr. Spencer, as he resumed his position on the straw, glad to feel interested enough in anything that would divert his attention from the present.

"Well, she's just an ould residenther, an ould ancient gentlewoman, who goes twice a week to hear mass."

"Where?" said Edward, carelessly.

"Batherashin!" exclaimed his guard with a broad smile, "catch a weasel asleep, yer honour; there's no use in yer trying to find out where you are, nor how you got in it, nor you'll never know how you'll get out of it either; only, out you'll be, plase God, an' soon; for faix, I'd rather be takin' my little exercise through the mountains, than discoorsin' a gentleman when I'm forced to be watching him and myself too; and that's the thruth if it's the last word I had to speake."

"Are there many of you here?"

"More than's welcome any way, Sir."

"Do you know who I am?" inquired Mr. Spencer.

"Faix, I do, Sir, and so does all the country; and sure it's heading us we thought you'd be, and what would hinder yer honour from becoming a grate gineral, and marching us to glory, or anywhere else yer honour plases?"

Edward was strongly tempted to begin to reason with his gaoler again, but another idea got possession of his mind; he had heard how impossible it was to bribe the people to betray a trust, and he resolved to test its truth, laying his train carefully, and as he thought, capitally.

"You are a poor man, I presume."

"Devil a poorer, yer honour, barring the beggars, which, thank God, I never was; and they're not so bad off as many a poor fellow who wants the bit and scorns to ax it—of the quality I mane; we all ax it of each other when we want it, get and give, and give and get, as it turns out."

"Are you married?"

"No, Sir, not yet, but I'm fixed all the same, a purthy little girl who doats down alive on me; we'll not put it off longer than Aister, any way, because if something doesn't happen before then, where's the good of letting our young time go past, and grow ould before we marry."

"Are you promised any land then?"

"Is it land? ah, then, sure, how could any one promise the land without turning some other poor boy out, and I'd scorn to take the sod over any man's head. Oh, no! I'm *promised* no land, but sure if we've luck, some of the places must come back to the ould proprietors, that's a sure thing!"

"I have an idea of letting a portion of what my uncle always kept in his own hands for grazing, in small farms or holdings, of from one to three acres, and building a two-roomed cottage on each, so as to enable poor men with good characters to live comfortably."

The man shifted his position, and looked earnestly, but yet somewhat suspiciously, at Mr. Spencer.

"My cousin Darby Doyle tould me something about that."

"What a numerous family you must be," said Mr. Spencer, "every second man I have met is a Doyle."

" My mother was one, it's a good Christian name—but you'd be charging a dale for the house in the rint?"

" No; I think about two pounds an acre."

" With the house?"

" Yes."

" Then, if there was a bit of a lase, there would be a dale for that?"

" Not a farthing."

" Then, maybe, your honour would have only Protestants on it?"

" I don't care what a tenant's faith is, as long as he is an honest man."

The peasant again changed his position.

" And you'd give a lase?"

" Certainly, after a fair trial on both sides, and always provided the man belonged to no illegal association."

The peasant's countenance fell.

" Oh, bedad, Sir! there's not one of us could stand the counthry, if we didn't do as others do; yer honour would have no tenants." Both paused, and the peasant added after a few moments, " To be sure, if all gentlemen did *that*, we'd have no rason but to be asy."

" Who knows what a good example may do?"

" God love your honour! it's little you know about them. They have one face to yer honour and another to the counthry."

" But cannot you see also, that the landlord who has a worthless vagabond on his estate, that will not pay his rent, is much to be pitied?"

" But sure every craythur would pay if he could; and if your honour comes to that, there's many of them that has no more right to the land than I have—land pillaged and divided afther it was soaked in the blood of its rightful owners."

" Perhaps," said Edward, with a half smile, " you may have some claim to Spencer Court?"

" Oh, sorra a bit, Sir," he answered, seriously; " though I wouldn't say as much for Lord Bantry's. Bedad, I'd be mighty glad to come in for an acre and a house though, yer honour, only for the last condition, and if nothing better turns up!"

" Which means, I suppose, if you cannot cut all our throats in the meantime," answered Edward.

" The Lord forbid, Sir! It's only one here and there, yer honour, whose throats are fit for nothing else. Sure if *you* were thought of that way, there would have been nothing to hinder its being done last night, quite ready and convaient, and no more about it. But your honour's looking tired. Maybe ye'd take a sleep, and I'll keep the place quiet."

" And introduce me to Miss Anne when I waken?" inquired Edward.

" Bedad, as by all accounts yer honour's heart is safe enough," replied the Irishman, quickly, " I might do that same."

Edward thought him an impudent rascal, and telling him to vanish, was soon in a deep sleep.

When he awoke the day was evidently far spent ; the evening sun was sinking, and the mountain looked bright and burnished, as the rocks caught the various rays of light ; the lake reflected the shadows on its smooth surface, and the morass exhibited the most beautiful tints and shades of colour. Edward saw by his watch it was seven o'clock. He stamped on the floor, and shook the door, apparently without making any one hear ; at all events, no one made his appearance. The confinement was becoming more and more irksome every moment, and he resolved to lose as little time as possible in endeavouring to bribe his gaoler. Having much purely English faith in the power of gold, he did not quite believe that one so poor would or could refuse it. At last the peasant came ; and in an incredibly short time, a sort of Irish mountain dinner—an abundance of potatoes, fried eggs and bacon, a boiled rabbit, and a roast duck, which the poor fellow laid upon the table uncouthly, but with much cheerfulness, and a species of grace, "that God would give his honour the good of it." Of course the whiskey was there, in a marvellously old and odd-shaped bottle, accompanied by an object eagerly sought for by all antiquarians, a deock-an-durras glass, which, to the Irishman's great astonishment, Edward refused to use ; upon which Paddy proposed to "show his honour the way of it," which he did by triumphantly draining off its contents of "punch"—he had manufactured after the most approved fashion, with water "screeching" hot, and everything else, "barring" the sugar and lemons.

After all his preparations, Mr. Spencer submitted the offer to his gaoler in a very inartistic manner—telling him how particularly anxious he was to get to Spencer Court ; and that the sum he would give him, if he conveyed him there safely that night, should be enough to take him, and the girl he loved, out of the country, for he knew he would not like to remain in it after aiding his escape ; in fact, he would give him a hundred pounds, if, by the dawn of the next morning, he was either there or at Macroom.

The offer, much to his astonishment, made no impression on his guardian. He neither expressed approbation, or the contrary, at its object or magnitude : he simply refused it, as a thing impossible to be listened to, much less taken into consideration. Edward increased his terms. He knew the man was struggling with poverty ; that his Irish heart was full of love ; that the sum he offered would rescue him from the one, and recompense him for the other. Still more astonished at his careless refusal, he asked him if he did not think it enough.

"Nothing, Sir," he said, "that you could offer, would be enough to make up for my sinning my soul. Don't I see, as plain as eggs, that it would be all as one as if I turned informer myself ? Don't I see, that what you want is just to tell what you fancy, and set the country on us at once ? and what we want is to pre-

vent you. And as to Mary, she'd live all her days on potatoes, and die in a ditch, before she'd take up with me for good and all, if she thought I'd have the dirty dhrop in me. Ye don't know the holding out that's in the Irish girls in a good cause."

Edward then endeavoured to reason with him, as to whether his cause was really a good cause or a bad one. But Paddy's ready wit "bothered" him at every sentence. It was like attempting to reason with Jack-a-Lantern—a thing with abundance of brilliancy, but no brains.

Despite the man's civility, he watched Mr. Spencer narrowly; and it was with a feeling of extreme horror of what the next few hours might bring to others, that he felt them pass. He delivered himself over to the moodiness of desponding thoughts, without an effort to cast them off.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE CAPTIVITY CONTINUED.

THE night passed away without an incident of any kind; Edward Spencer awoke frequently, to see in half-waking dreams that the moon was shining on the lake, and the stars were bright in the softness of a summer sky. There was neither owl nor bat to disturb the solitude of the ruins, nor was there a corn-field where the rail could shelter. Soon after break of day, he heard, as he thought, the whistle of the green plover, first at a distance, then nearer to where he was confined; but shortly, a movement in the room beneath, and the sound of the heavy door opening carefully, convinced him of some fresh arrival. Moving a portion of the straw upon which he had lain, he ascertained that a hole in the floor was covered by a worm-eaten portion of an oak plank; this he pushed aside, hoping to discover the new comer; but instead, he looked down into a chamber, or more properly speaking a cell, smaller than the one he occupied, as if divided off from the room where he had heard the movement; there sleeping calmly—the beautiful sleep of youth—was a woman. The light streamed in upon her couch, from a window similar to that by which it was admitted into the room he occupied.

The white and delicate hands, the high, fair brow, round which the hair carelessly folded, the soft transparent skin, and a gold chain lost within the bosom of a black silk dress, indicated a person of much higher grade than "Miss Anne's" relatives could be supposed to hold under their present circumstances; it was evident, from her not being undressed, that she was not at home in this mountain fortress, and he wondered if it were possible that she was a prisoner like himself. Despite the repose, there was a pained and worn expression in the slight contraction of her brow; and once or twice the delicate rose-like lips were closed, as if by pain, or a desire to repress some painful feeling. Edward

felt he had no right to watch the sleeper, and yet he continued to do so, fascinated by the loveliness of the fair unknown, and quite alive to the romance of seeing such a person in such a place.

Suddenly, a change passed over her face, she moved her head uneasily upon the rudely contrived pillow, her bosom heaved, sighs escaped from her lips, and tears forced their way down her cheeks; her features seemed convulsed by grief or terror; she murmured many words, but so indistinctly, that Edward could not ascertain their meaning; suddenly she clasped her hands, and then they sunk in an attitude, which, to have caught, would have immortalised a sculptor. While hoping, and yet fearing, she would awake, Edward's ear was arrested by the seneschal's stumbling up the stairs, as if he had been rattling up a mountain; hastily replacing the board and arranging the straw, he feigned sleep to admiration.

"The top of the morning to yer honour," he said, when Edward opened his eyes; "the tip-top of it to yer honour, and there's some warm wather and a razor I brought ye. Bedad! I take pride in myself for making such a beautiful own man; maybe, it's a place I'd be getting and doing all kinds of grandeur one of these days through the manes of it—who knows?"

The breakfast was much like the previous one, but Edward thought he was more narrowly watched than before by the mountaineer; he became impatient of observation, and not even the announcement, that "his guardian had sent 'as good' as ten mile to get a piper to *dirart* his honour; and he so lonely—a piper, or a fiddler, or even a fifer, better than nothing" could render Edward tolerant of his presence. His restlessness increased as the day advanced; he could receive no reply to his inquiries as to the probable duration of his captivity; and if left for five minutes to himself, the indefatigable guardian was sure to return, and fixing his large gray eyes upon his victim, would ask in the quietest possible manner, "What his honour would plase to want?"

"Want!" repeated Edward, at last. "Want! do you think I want to eat my way out of this cursed hole?"

"Is it eat yer way out of that wall? bedad, Sir, I don't; do ye think, yer honour, that I take ye for Oliver Crummel?"

"Did he eat his way through your walls?"

"He did, Sir; he was the greatest devil that ever came *across* Ireland—and that's a bould word, and Queen Elizabeth to the fore, and the dirty Dutchman that yez took up from over the wather for a king—sure he was here, Sir."

"Who? Oliver Cromwell?"

"Ay, indeed, Sir! and I'm not sure but he's in it still—it's as likely to be him as anything else, for all they say to the contrary. Did ye sleep asy last night?"

"Yes."

"Mighty asy?"

"Yes—very well."

"And see nothing?"

“No!”

“Well, glory be to God! What does yer honour think I was doing all the night, but meandering up and down that long terrace walk afther Miss Anne, the poor disturbed craythur; the one that do be with her is away, and charged me to watch her, for fear anything would come to her, or she should go to anything.”

“Indeed! what should come to her?”

“Oh, whisht! but it’s well known in the countrry, so there’s no harm in spaking of it, and it might divart yer honour, for I’m fearful we’ve no chance of the piper, or any kind of music; they’re so busy, playing for the soldiers to engage them at the dances and the like——”

“Has Miss Anne any relatives?” interrupted Edward.

“Is it relations? Faix! she has lashins of them—plinty! ay! up to a twentieth cousin.”

“Any living with her?”

“Betimes, when the new crop comes in; but not half as many as you’d expect; bedad, there’s hardly a poor boy suffered lately that wasn’t her blood relation, to say nothing of all that wor transported, and gone to America.”

“Has she any young relations?”

“Plinty, young and old, but not stopping with her; there’s no young woman can abide the place at night; the priest has been here twice about it; but it’s no good, nor won’t be I’m thinking, till she goes herself.”

“What do you mean by the priest being up?”

“To lay—the—the noise; he laid it twice in the Red Sea, but it came back again when its time was gone; he couldn’t lay it for more than a year on account of his being only a friar.”

“Well, tell me all about it,” said Edward, in despair, seeing that the man was resolved to stick to him more closely than ever.

“Her people lived here for a thousand years, more or less, a rale ancient ould family, and the last of them was a grate gentleman intirely, sitting up like an eagle, sometimes in this castle, where he made and drank his own whiskey, and sometimes in another, that was canted long ago; wisha! every day’s bad luck to him that bought it!”

“Why? Did he not wish to sell it?”

“Faix, ay! to be sure he did; but one doesn’t abide seeing a bit of a grazier *’squirring* himself on the strength of the bit of land, which he buys with his dirty thrash, and setting up to be as great as if he’d been born a gentleman for many hundred years upon it.”

“Well, go on,” said Edward, who could not help thinking over a new proof of the total want of sympathy with justice the people evinced on all occasions.

“He died like a prince as he was. Afther keeping out a gang of gaugers, and sending them back, with little life left in ‘em, for a reinforcement, the dirty thrash! he got the whiskey cask lifted on the table, and sat upon it in all his glory, like a king on a throne!

and sung—" the man paused and crossed himself—" no matther what he sung ; but as the last word was out of his lips, he fell over, a dead man ! "

" And he left his property to this Miss Anne ? "

" Ay did he—or rayther he did not, for he made no will ; and the heir male would have come from foreign parts to dispute it with the three young ladies, his daughters, who wor young then, only for a rason he had ; it would not be convaynient for him to come over here, because—but no matther for that. There was Miss Anne and Miss Lucy, and the youngest, a grate beauty ; they say the blaze of her eyes was enough to knock the heart out of any man, and she had a voice like a thrush in June, and she was mighty fond entirely of larning and all sorts of Latin, and they all thought she had a vocation for a holy life, wanting to be a nun, and her great hope was, that her and her sisters would be able, through France or Spain, to get this ancient ould place converted into a nunnery. Well, they had letters from foreign parts about it, and at last who should come over from Portingall or Italy (as he said), but a priest, sent to see and settle it all ; and a fine holy place this was to be made of, very different from what it was in ould times, to be sure, but still a fine place. Well, instead of being ould and venerable, this priest was young and remarkable handsome ; and Father O'Grady always thought it was mighty quare that he never would go over the hill to help and serve mass or the like, only excused himself on account of some obstacle he said he had in his throat ; only teaching Miss Agnes Latin and laying out plans for the nunnery. Well, time passed, and there were quare things said, but no one cared to turn their tongue much to serve their thoughts, on account of the dress he wore ; but the short and the long was, that he vanished from the place as quickly as he came, and soon after, Miss Agnes took to her bed, and no one could stay near the other two for the mortal crossness that came over them, and there wasn't another word said of the nunnery. Well, reports get about on the four winds of heaven, and one night a man who was seeking a cow that had got over the mountain, said he heard the most awful cries coming out of Miss Agnes' room, and that in the midst of the sobs and groans he saw one of the ladies fly along the terrace with something in her arms, and fling it as you'd fling a stone as far as ever she could into the lake, and she'd hardly done so when he saw Miss Agnes start out like one in grave-clothes, and it was as much as ever the first sister could do to hinder her from throwing herself also into the wather, and the screams of the poor lady sunk into his heart, and what she cried was ' My child ! my child ! ' and the three were out by this time, screaming and skirling like sperits, and the two dragged in the third. Now there's only the man's word for it, but let it be as it will, the poor thing was never seen—not to say seen—from that day. But my mother lived with them as good as five years atther, and she saw many a time that beautiful creature, gone in mind and body to a shadow, sitting on the floor of the little room she

lived in, on a heap of straw, tying up stones for a rosary one minute, and hushooing a bundle of rushes as if it was a born babby the next, and then she'd tie two sticks in a cross together and pray to it, God help her! And so she wasted and died; and the thing that bothered my mother was, that our own priest—(a fine man he was, the heavens be his bed,) refused to bury her in holy ground, and they were forced to lay her somewhere about here, myself doesn't want to know where; and after that, all their people wanted Sister Anne, and Sister Lucy, as they call them, to come down and live among them, for there was no doubt Miss Agnes '*walked*,' but nothing could move them from the ould stones. No one ever saw them smile after her death, and they took on them the habit and ways of nuns: Miss Anne wears it to this day, and doesn't mind who comes or goes no more than if it wasn't her own place, and her other sister is dead these twenty years. No one knows her, none but ourselves think she's in life. I'll go bail not a creature in Cork, or Bandon, or Bantry, that's living now, ever heard her name, and how she lives in this world, I don't know. I've been up here some few times about one little job and another when there's anything to be kep out of the way, and I'm certain she walks all night, and often meets those she'd rayther not, face to face, poor thing! It's an awful thing for the dead and the living to meet each other, and stand looking the one at flesh, the other at a heap of bare rattling bones shivering through the moonlight."

"What a scoundrel that priest was," said Edward.

"What priest?" inquired the man. "Is it his reverence that wouldn't bury her, ye mane?"

"No! the other," replied Mr. Spencer.

"Why sure yer honour is not so blind as to think he *was* a priest? Not he, indeed—only the ould boy himself. Priest! Oh, the Lord forbid we should even the like of that to a right priest. It was"—and he drew himself close to Edward—"it was one of the evil sperits, that do be getting power somehow, that took the shape, just to beguile her, that was all: sorra a thing else. Look out, Sir, if ye plase; now ye can see Miss Anne."

Edward looked towards the terrace, and perceived a remarkable-looking woman, straight and tall, dressed in a habit somewhat like that worn by the sisters of charity on the continent. Her robe of black serge was evidently much decayed. She was walking towards him, and he could see the long rosary depending from her waist, with its massive cross of chased silver. It was evident that some of the more monotonous habits of this world clung to her still, for as she walked she twirled a distaff, spinning after the old fashion, slowly and tremblingly, as if her fingers had lost their strength, and resorted to their old occupation from custom rather than pleasure. Pleasure! It must have been indeed long since any feeling of pleasure, or even interest in the things of life, disturbed those worn, emaciated, and terror-stricken features. Edward had never looked upon such a face, and hoped he might never behold

such another. It was only the eyes that gave indication of life, if the sudden suspicious movement of those large, pale, moonlight looking orbs might be really said to be occasioned by any sympathy in common with her kind.

“She’s always looking behind her that way,” observed his guard, in a tone of pity. “The Lord look down upon her—she’s always thinking thoughts known only to God and herself. It will be a mercy when the Lord is pleased to take her out of a world that only troubles her.”

“She must have been very proud,” said Edward Spencer. “Even now what a haughty bearing there is about the head and carriage.”

“You may say that, Sir. And why wouldn’t she? There’s the blood of half a hundred Irish kings and princes creeping through those hard ould veins—that’s something to be proud of, any how! for Ireland was a country—*once*.”

And again Mr. Spencer’s mind reverted to his conversation with Dean Graves, and he thought, “how can we expect to make a people rational in this our present state of existence, who have no sympathies, and are taught no sympathies, with our present; but who consider this present a violence and an insult on the past they so much honour! Time must indeed elapse, and new thoughts, and much knowledge, engrafted here, must be left to fructify, before we can make them practically useful. I see the dean was right. We have taken everything away from them, and given them nothing in return. They nourish their old thoughts, old customs, and old language; the present deals hardly with them, and the future, they expect, will be but a repetition of the present; it is only in the past they live, only in the past they exult. ‘Ireland was a country *once*!’ What a pity their legislators did not study their character before they forced laws upon them. What a pity they did not think before they acted. What a pity”—and Edward bewildered himself by recollections, and theories, and speculations; recalling his conversation on board the steamer with Dean Graves; and wondering how long it would be before steam navigation and education would amalgamate Ireland with the sister country; thinking how ridiculous the narrative of his imprisonment would sound in the English county paper, and wondering how long it would last. His dinner was accompanied by the same attention and excuses as on the previous day, and as the evening advanced, his watchman, after politely inquiring if he was in his honour’s way, and regretting that there was no company to be had that would be “divartin’” to his honour, *shouldered* himself against the door-post, crossing one foot over the other, and with a freedom, as usual, both easy and respectful, commenced a conversation.

“You’ve a fine place of your own in England, Sir, I’ll go bail?” Edward smiled. “And your people are mighty fond of you, for you’re the fine landlord to them. I’ll engage you never *drove* one of them yet?”

Mr. Spencer had learned that "driving" signified ejection, and answered, "No, I never had occasion; they pay their rent punctually."

"To be sure they do, as they've something to pay it with. And if yer honour finds them able to pay the forty shillings, you don't raise it to fifty."

"I could not, if I would; they have their leases."

"That's a fine thing, Sir. And I warrant you're a good hand to give them straw to mend their thatch, and a bit of timber towards building up their little place, at the first going off, if they want it."

"Oh, their houses," said Edward. "They are put into comfortable slated cottages at first, built either of brick or stone, and are expected to keep them as they find them."

"It's no wonder they're comfortable! Slated houses over their heads at the first going off! Well, I'd be mighty proud just to see a tenant put into a place like that, and no trouble. Oh, then it's they that would be the ungratefulest people in the world, if they were not content and happy. And they don't be disputing about their religion there, Sir; they're all Protestants, I'm thinking?"

"Not all," replied Edward, humouring his gaoler with great good nature; and, seeing he was determined upon questioning, desired him to sit down. This the man thanked him for, but refused to do.

"My legs, plase yer honour, have better manners than to be weary standing before yer honour. Only, Sir, if it's plasing to you, what religion is in it, if it's not Protestant?"

"Oh, Dissenters of various kinds," replied Edward, carelessly.

"Is it Swaddlers, Sir? Well, I have no objection in life to a good sound Protestant; but the back of my hand to the Swaddlers, all the world over. Circumnavigating they always wor; bitter against the two ancient ould churches; because, Sir, though you had no religion before Luther, still the Protestant faith is ould enough to be respectable; but the Swaddlers set up for themselves, without bell, book, or candle, and strike at us both. Why even Abel Richards grew worse since he took to Swaddling."

Edward smiled, but his questioner had hardly commenced:—

"May I make bould," he continued, changing the subject, "may I make bould to inquire if you think the Irish ladies as handsome as the ladies of your own country?"

Edward almost blushed at the question. "I really don't know," he replied, "I have hardly had time to observe."

"But sure yer honour has seen them in England, there's full and plenty of 'em there, I'm sorry to say, for it's in their own country we'd rather keep them."

"Well, I think those I have seen, very intelligent."

"Sir?"

"Clever and handsome."

"True for ye, Sir," replied the peasant, disappointed, however, by Edward's cool praise; "and, indeed, the poor Irish women go through a deal of hardship, a great deal, labouring in the fields—working at 'the bit of land,' if they've the luck to have it, while the husband is slaving for his eightpence or tenpence a day—turning the wheel—working the needles—and minding the children, and all with a cheerful heart and voice."

"Indeed, I believe it."

"God bless you, Sir, for that. The English are not as fond as we are of the larning, are they, Sir?"

"I fear not. John Bull is a more stupid fellow than Paddy, but he is very firm and steady."

"And so are we, Sir, in our hearts; an Irishman is firm to his church and his country, and grateful, I hope, Sir."

"I hope so too," replied Mr. Spencer, "but some of you know of conspiracies against your masters, and though they have been kind to you, you never warn them of their danger."

"I beg your pardon, Sir; if a master breaks the rules, that is, takes away the bit of land, or distrains, or the like, he knows in his own heart what he has to expect; there's nothing done unknown to him, he gets his warning, and we can't go against the law; but let any one dare to lift a finger against *him* for any other reason, and every man, woman, and child in his service would lay down their lives for him. I kept a master's house once; myself and two other farming servants kept the high sheriff's writs out; and tore down the bills of sale they put up of his property all through the county. Ay, and the barony got him returned for parliament, in spite of the law."

"Why," replied Edward, affecting not to understand him, "you spoke just now of not going against the law, and the next moment of withstanding the high sheriff."

"One," replied the man, firmly, "is the law the country is forced to make for its own protection, the other, what's made for it: there's a deal in the differ. I lost the two fingers of this hand defending a stranger, who would have been robbed, and maybe murdered, once, on the Glanmire road, near Cork—and he by himself; I saved his life, as I'd save any man's when it's not against what I'm sworn to."

"But my good friend—" commenced Edward.

The man made a gesture of impatience, moving from one leg to the other.

"I beg your pardon, Sir; you're a well-larned and a kind gentleman, and a stranger, and you can't see the country through, and you just read the things as they're put in the papers—no more than that; and, as I told you before, many thanks to your kindness, but what you'd say couldn't turn me, and maybe you might say something that wouldn't be pleasant to hear."

"And what then?" asked Mr. Spencer.

"Nothing, Sir; only, maybe, it might only be what you said before; the gentry have been saying the same thing over and over

again, and doing the same thing over and over again ; and that's quare—for if we're breaking in a horse, and find one way won't do, why we try another ; but they've only the one way with us—over and over again. Maybe, some day they'll try another. My grandfather's father was a mighty pleasantould man (but if it's wearying to yer honour, I'll hould my tongue), only as I must soon lave you alone, I thought a little talk about us might lighten the time that you're on the mountain for change of air—and this air is uncommon fine ; I've heard many say, it was as fine air as any in the whole country."

"I dare say it is," replied Edward, both amused and provoked by the fellow's coolness, "but the sooner I breathe the lower air of Spencer Court, the better I shall be pleased ; in heaven's name, will you tell me how long I am to be caged up here?"

"No longer, Sir, than the gentlemen can help ; I'm sure I'd go on my hands and feet all the way to Bantry to make the place agreeable to you, and if we could have got a piper or a fiddler, or any living thing to get a bit of sport out of—for sure it's the charge of the world we had about yer honour ; only that poor Miss Anne is so *bothered* and so stupid ; if it was forty years ago you had the luck to be in it, it's different entertainment you'd have got, I'm sure of that ! But my grandfather's father had a power of lagends : and though he couldn't talk English, he'd the world and all of Latin in his head, and Ossian in the original on the top of his tongue ; and as to the Druids' altar above there, and a fine sight it is—"

"I should like so much to see it," interrupted Edward, "I should like so very much to see it; do you know, that in England we talk a great deal about your round towers, and your Druids' altars and Ogham stones."

"I dare say you do—why not?" replied the mountaineer, not seeming to be at all astonished at the information, "it's only natural that people that haven't such things should think a dale about them ; they're so plenty with us, that we don't think any thing of them ; and my grandfather's father—"

"But could I not see this Druids' altar ?"

"Bedad, you could, Sir, if you wor there ; it's so big every blind man in the country can see it—almost ; but honour bright, Sir, you wouldn't get a poor boy like me into trouble ; and until I'm tould, I dare not send yer honour out for a walk even that far. But so little did my grandfather's father think about them Druid altars that once having wandered half the day until almost night-fall, about the hill-side, after an unruly young heifer, one of the rale Kerry breed that's first cousin to the goats, and that would win a steeplechase if any one would ride her ; after spending his day that way, when he got under the shelter of the stone and the sun setting, he lay his gray head on his han'l and fell to rest in two minutes, just as innocent and sleep-full as a new born baby. Well, he never could tell how long he slept, but at last he woke and wondered to see the beautiful colour of the setting sun

all gone, faded away like a rose in hot July, and nothing above him but the moon and the dawshy stars sporting and sparkling through the heavens, and he wondered where the heifer could be, when he turned his eyes a little to the left, and there she stood as meek as a lamb, not a stir in her, and her wild wicked eyes fixed upon a bunch of green blackberries, and her tail, that used to be stiff as a blast of the north wind, hanging down like a bunch of silk, and her ears quiet, and a sugaun of fruit and fresh-made hay round her neck and one end of it in the hand of the most beautiful little creature the sight of his eyes ever looked upon, and she twisting and spinning about on the top of the heifer's little stumpy horn.

“‘Oh! murder, my lady,’ says my grandfather’s father, in Irish ‘is it there you are, and is it my beautiful little *cween* yer going to whisk off to yer own country?’

“‘Oh, fie!’ she says; and, saving yer presence, Sir, she says, ‘is it a Saxon you take me for, to be taking the good out of the country? I’m no such thing. I found yer little beast on the wild hill side, and I brought her to you; and there she is, as tame and as gentle as a new-born lamb. She’ll never give you any more trouble as long as she lives. I’ve got all the wildness out of her, that I have.’ Well, my great grandfather thanked her, as in duty bound, and the little heifer walked over to him, and the good lady dropped the sugaun in his hand, and sat herself very quietly down in the centre of the Kerry cow’s forehead, looking at my father.

“‘Haven’t I tamed her?’ she says.

“‘You have, indeed, my lady,’ he answered; ‘and if you would not think I’d be making too bould, I’d be glad to know how you managed it, at all, for I’d like to try the same method on my wife, who’s anything but tame. She’s mother to fourteen, grandmother to twenty-eight, and great-grandmother to five childre. She’ll be seventy-two years of age come next Saint Martinmas, and she’s just as bothersome, as talkative, and tazing to me now, as she was the day I married her, when she was not all out seventeen, and was called the Wild Rose of Muskerry.’

“‘Is she a great bother to you?’ said the lady, and her voice sounded as sweet as a lone mountain rill in hot thirsty weather.

“‘She is, indeed,’ he answered.

“‘But she has lived with you, and loved you, and worked for you, and brought you fine sons, and virtuous daughters?’

“‘She has so; but she fights sometimes to have a little of her own way; she does a deal that’s pleasing to me in some things, but every now and then she wants to be what she calls ‘considered.’”

“‘And you don’t like that?’

“‘I do not, my lady; I like to have my own way, and not be tazed.’

“And what have you done to keep her quiet ?”

“Why, then, I may as well tell you, for I dare say you know ; whenever she puts me out with her grumbling, I give her a batin.”

“And if she puts you out again ?” said the little fairy.

“Why then I give her another.”

“And if she still bothers you ?”

“What do I do, is it, my lady ?” asked my great grandfather, “why I give her another.”

“And so on, I suppose,” said the jewel ; and at first she laughed, but by degrees her face grew serious, and she looked at my great grandfather, very—very steadfast ; ‘and suppose,’ she said, ‘you wor to try the other way ; try kindness—and justice—above all, kindness ; it did well with a cow,’ she went on stroking the baste’s ears ; ‘it did well with a cow, and I don’t see why it should not do with a woman : you hunted her, I coaxed her.’”

“You’re a capital maker of fairy tales,” said Mr. Spencer, laughing, “and I must be more stupid even than an Englishman not to read it.”

“Oh, Sir, I give you my word.”

“Ay, ay, I understand, and, moreover, I agree with you.”

“But to finish the story.”

While the peasant was calming his features into a quiet expression, a horn-blast came over the mountain, shrill and clear.

“I ask yer honour’s pardon,” he said, and Edward thought he changed colour ; the haste with which he left the room, however, did not prevent his securing the fastening ; but in less than ten minutes he returned, saying :

There were plenty of “the boys” below, and about the place, but they mightn’t be as “divartin” to his honour *as he was*—for they did not understand a word of English ; and so there would be no use in his rapping or calling, for there wasn’t one of them would answer. He hoped to be back with his honour before twelve that night, and there never was anything *out of the way* until after that a good while. He hoped his honour would be comfortable and *contint*. Edward was too distressed to make any observation, but looked his feelings so well, that after hasping the door outside, the man unfastened it, and poking in his large shock head, said,

“I hope yer honour isn’t *astray* with me for just doing my duty. If I had a minute, Sir, I’d *set a case*, and then you’d see I couldn’t help it. Just bid God be wid me before I go ; because, though it’s only for a while, just down the mountain, you understand, still one does not want to have bad blood tracking one’s *traheens*.”

“I’m sure I have no bad blood towards you, my good fellow,” said Mr. Spencer, “and I hope God will be with you in all ways that merit his protection.”

“Thank yer honour,” and he fastened the door on the outside.

The poor peasant’s manner convinced Mr. Spencer that he was going on a service of danger, and though he spoke about his returning so rapidly, Edward felt assured it was more than likely he would not be back that night. He waited for some time, listening attentively to catch any sound; but after a few minutes the place became as still and silent as a tomb, no echoing voices or echoing feet; once he saw a bare-footed, half-naked boy below and watched him as he departed at a half-trot, skirting the margin of the lake and then poleing himself across it on a bundle of brushwood, and finally bounding up the most perpendicular part of the mountain with the alertness of a wild kid. Mr. Spencer then removed the piece of wood and looked into the room beneath, but it was tenantless; he saw, however, that the window was much larger than he had imagined, and was open; and upon investigating more closely he also perceived that the board or beam he had pushed aside, was only a portion of a trap-door dexterously contrived in the ceiling, which was of oak, not of stone like the one he was in—probably altered from its original formation; this door opened, not directly into the room, but over a sort of closet or recess, communicating not only with that chamber, but one beneath it—a dungeon perhaps; and upon examining the roofing of the cell he occupied, Edward saw that a stone immediately above had once been moveable, although, not having been displaced for years, it had become of the exact colour of the older stones, and the division could not be observed except upon minute scrutiny.

There could be no difficulty in his letting himself down into the lower room, and the window, he felt assured, was not more than five or six feet from the ground. Disappointed as he certainly was, at not seeing its fair occupant once again, a sudden hope sprung up within him that he had discovered a way of escape, and might still be able to prevent the plan of the Whiteboys from taking effect. He was certain, notwithstanding his gaoler’s boast that there were plenty of people about, that every man had been called away for some particular purpose; yet he felt that he had better wait until evening closed in, before he made the attempt; he then replaced the wood, leaving the smallest possible space through which he could make observations—and no doubt the time that intervened between his resolve and twilight appeared an age. Never, to his thinking, had the sun so lingered in the heavens, never was there so tedious a sunset, never did night come on so creepingly; and then every thing was so still, so deathlike in the house. At last, to his great relief, he saw the dark form of Miss Anne pacing along the terrace, and the window below opened in a different direction to the one from whence he looked. Surely it was dark enough now, and he could but make the attempt; at the very moment that he knelt on the floor to withdraw the worm-eaten beam, just as his fingers rested on it, a slight noise made him aware there was

some one beneath ; he looked through the chink and perceived that the fair sleeper had returned. He could not see her distinctly, but there was no mistaking the outline of the face and head. She stood at the open window, and in another moment he heard her in conversation with some one outside, who, like herself, spoke in a low and guarded tone.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE ESCAPE.

EDWARD SPENCER was of too lofty a nature to play the eavesdropper: but a variety of contending feelings chained him to the spot when he recognised the voice of the treasure-seeker, and from his words was at once convinced that the lady who had attracted his attention was no other than Ellen Macdonnel—a prisoner, whether voluntary or involuntary remained to be ascertained. Several sentences had been spoken before Edward comprehended their tendency. At last he heard the lady say :

“ I dare not go where you would have me; and yet I cannot remain here much longer ; if I do it will kill me.”

There was a reply, which Edward did not hear ; again she spoke—

“ All I want is the means to leave the country ; that is all I wait for, all I desire ; there is no safety if I remain.”

There were some other words from without.

“ Thank you, good, kind Matthew, I know that, and I am sure I wish you could find the treasure you dream of ; but trust me, it will be only a dream. I am sure you have sought as you say, day and night, I am certain of it, and you need not tell me that you will give me all you find, good Matthew ; and what you find I will promise to take, and I am sure that promise makes you happy ; but I dare not, my good master, trust Dean Graves or any else ; they would think they did a kind—a just—a most meritorious action in bringing me forward ; they would think it their duty, and their love for me would lead them to do what would break my heart. I can trust no one—no one but God ; and I do trust Him, and hope to be delivered from this state—a hundred times worse than death. No, Matthew, I did not say I would not trust you ; now, do not weep, that is so like a child : I know the danger you incur in venturing to find me, as long as it is my brother’s pleasure I should not be found, and I may truly add, my own desire also.”

Another pause, and Edward caught a few of the treasure-seeker’s words ; he had raised himself up, and now clung to the window.

“ I cannot explain to you all I mean, good Matthew ; God knows this place seems to me, I dare not say what ; and that woman ! Oh, Matthew ! if they should murder me as they have

murdered others, and throw me into that lake. Why does not Lawrence come, when he knows what I endure for the sake of his safety; I am sure there is something dreadful in progress, or the men would not have gone away, watching, as they have been, some other hostage."

The Master of Spencer Court lifted the trap, and found that the descent was much easier than he expected, as there were projections whereon to rest the feet. Ellen was not aware of the movement, so fully was she occupied with her old friend; and Mr. Spencer quitted the recess, and announced himself immediately, so as to prevent her being alarmed. Nothing could exceed poor Matthew's delight and astonishment at his appearance, he both remembered and forgot all Ellen had told him, his mind became more confused than ever. "She said she could trust no one but God, and that he would help her, and behold help is sent; it is really wonderful—quite marvellous—and there is no one to hinder her going now."

Ellen was unable to speak; the affectionate tenderness of her cousin's manner, added to his unexpected appearance, unnerved her completely; it seemed so long since she had heard the voice, and such a voice, of kindness, that her thoughts echoed what Matthew had repeated; she had looked for help to God, and He had sent it! It was impossible to meet Ellen's eyes without reading, and at once, a volume of high thoughts, while feeling the presence of her perfect truth. Edward's nature was too chivalrous not to acknowledge its influence, and he offered her the affection and protection of a brother, with an earnestness and sincerity not to be mistaken. The brave—the true—the upright—the virtuous—instinctively understand each other; there is no desire to deceive, no dread of deception; no introduction is needed, no explanation necessary.

"I little thought," she said, "when I heard that another prisoner had arrived, to be carefully looked to for a day or two; I little imagined who it was; nor had Biddy Doyle, who left me only last night, the least idea who the stranger could be, though she tried hard to prevail upon your guards to tell; they would all die rather than disclose any thing connected with their meetings."

Edward did not deem it prudent to impart to Matthew why he was so anxious to escape, but learned with great satisfaction that Miss Anne and two lads were all who were left to keep watch and ward, and from one or two words which Ellen heard, she did not think it was likely the men would return before the next night. Matthew was delighted at the idea of guiding Mr. Spencer over the mountain, not doubting but Ellen would accompany them.

"The sooner now you go the better, Mr. Spencer," she said, "the sooner the better; Matthew is a good guide. I have not asked why you were sent here, but be it what it may, I shall rejoice at your escape; I am sure you would not harm a mis-

guided people, and there are reasons why *you* should treat with care and tenderness some who have not only been misguided, but who misguide others."

"But you will come with us; surely you will not remain here," urged Edward Spencer, "why should you? I know the high and noble part you acted towards one so little worthy of it, and there is not a man in the county who is not prepared to render you homage."

"Homage!" repeated Ellen, "and to what would homage lead? I cannot explain it even to you, who in so short a space of time have taken away the blight of desolation from about me; but the thorny path I have to tread must be trodden; at all events, until some are in their graves and much has been forgotten: away from all who knew me once, my only hope, is to remain anywhere silently and secretly; my entreaty, that trusting as I do most firmly upon your honour, you will never mention where you have met me, except to Lady Mary O'Brien, until, if it should be worth your remembrance, my brother, at least, is in a distant country. I do entreat you by everything you hold sacred, not to say to any living creature, not even to Dean Graves or to his daughters, that you have seen me; they will think me a monster of ingratitude, but I must endure it; they will not think so always."

"It is to save your brother you do this," said Edward, taking Ellen's hand, and moving her away from Matthew, who still stood at the window, wavering between hope and disappointment, not understanding anything, yet feeling all things; "it is to save your brother—a brother unworthy—you do this."

"It is not because my brother is fortuneless, and differs from your received opinions, or even from mine," she answered, "that he must be unworthy; he is all I have in the wide world to love."

"And do you love him?"

"He is my brother," she replied, after a pause, "we are alone in the world, and the more lonely, the more dangerous his position, the more it is my duty to be to him in place of what other men enjoy."

"Do you know, that Abel Richards has offered a reward to whoever leads to your place of concealment?"

"The wretch!" she exclaimed, "the base, merciless hypocrite! I wish you had not named him; I should have liked these few moments spent with my dear uncle's nephew—"

"Your cousin—friend—brother—if you will," interrupted Edward, suffering his latent enthusiasm to gush forth, "I shall never forgive myself for not having long since done what he intended to do."

Ellen, though with a trembling voice, continued, as if he had not spoken.

"I should have liked them to have remained in my memory, pure, bright, and sparkling, like yonder star—unsullied; but his wanting to discover it, would be sufficient to keep it concealed

from the whole county ; however, I hope those he would sacrifice will be soon beyond his reach—the forsaken traitor—to wish to make me—! But you must go, and may God protect you, to the home of my childhood—my own dear home—that I may never see again ! ”

“ It is not so—it is not so,” said Matthew ; “ Sir, Mr. Spencer, you will let Miss Nelly come and see Spencer Court, will you not ? I am sure you will ; it will be a long time before they love you, Sir, as they love that little girl.”

“ Peace, Matthew ! ” said Ellen, struggling with her tears.

“ Nay, Miss Nelly, sure his honour knows it’s natural we should love what we see grow under our eye ; we do, if it is only for the trouble it gives us—we do, indeed ; she could be so useful to your honour, teach you how to mix judgment with your charity, and charity with your judgment.”

“ You do not heed the words of a fond, weak man ; Sir, no one heeds Master Mat ; and surely you will forgive me if I entreat you to judge kindly of the poor—and Mrs. Myler knows those who need most, where all indeed are needy—you will be patient with the poor, for they need patience ; and, oh, do not let any harden your heart against them ! Strangers get amused by their wit, and laugh at their blunders ; but when the starvation, and the beggary, and the entire wretchedness, when all that comes, they tire of it, and forget that charity—true charity—beareth all things ; the romance is one thing, the reality another. Dean Graves, he blames, pities, and yet loves them ; it requires a woman’s heart and a man’s head to manage them rightly. And one thing more ; there is a dog, that I brought a puppy in my arms to Spencer Court ; it has been my friend and companion for years ; it is old and feeble now, strangers and new servants may ill-treat or neglect it ; will *you* care for it ? ”

“ Anau ! ” said Master Mat. “ I forgot to tell you, dear, the poor craythur had the sense of a Christian. He was found dead at your room door, and Mrs. Myler buried him, darling, just by your own bower in the school garden. The sound of the river comes up there from the valley ; and the hum of the children’s voices, in their lessons, will be pleasant over his grave. He was mighty good to little children.”

This sad intelligence overflowed the heart of Ellen ; she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed bitterly.

“ See how she cries for the dumb beast,” said Matthew, “ and never shed a tear about parting with me—only would send me away without her, for no reason. Mighty strange are women ! Do try and persuade her, Sir. It’s a great pity—it’s a great pity. Her brother’s at the bottom of it all. A wild boy, Sir—very wild ; never would learn—never ! Never did more in languages than call me *maestro*, and never took delight in any book but that old history of Ireland, that he used to grind his teeth over. Poor Miss Ellen ! she’d pacify the country quicker than any regiment of soldiers. Don’t fret about the beast, Miss, darling,

I'll get ye another, twice as handsome, a little black-a-viced tarryer, or a lady spaniel, or a fine setter. But that won't do; no indeed it won't! It's not the beauty of the thing, but the loving it; and use is more near the heart than beauty."

Ellen apologised to Edward for her emotion, but did not venture to allude to its cause. A few days would make a great change; at present she lived in agony, not knowing what her brother's fate might be; and after gathering energy for the effort, she entreated Edward to remember that Lawrence had been peculiarly situated; that he had been aggrieved; that he had been trained, unhappily, in the strongest Irish hatred of English rule. She buried his faults, his harshness to herself, within her own bosom; but illumined his perfections with the light of her own love. She spoke with a feeling, an earnestness, so natural, so powerful, and yet so womanly, that Edward Spencer, as he gazed into her eloquent face, forgetting altogether his conventional coldness, permitted his lips for once to convey the feelings of his heart, and said, "I will remember only, that he is your brother." And then he endeavoured to induce her to promise that nothing should tempt her to leave her native land. He told her he had determined, before they met, to see that she received what, brought up as his uncle's child, she was entitled to receive. This, he said, was necessary to the preservation of his honour; to the embalming of his uncle's memory in the hearts of all just men. She should have whatever she desired, as to means; or would she write to him confidentially, and direct him as to her wishes? She owed him no thanks—it was her due, her right. It ought to have been done before, but he hoped for the pleasure of arranging it himself, while he assured her that in him she would ever meet the tenderness and affection of a brother. The young Englishman had forgotten altogether that he had known his fair relative moments and not years. He felt for her all he expressed; the feeling was enhanced by a meeting under such circumstances, and the regret that he might not see her again; the more than regret that he had not known her previously.

Again and again he entreated her to change her purpose. She felt as if she could have trusted him with her secret, and more than once was on the point of saying, "and yield my brother's life to Abel Richards;" but she remained firm and silent, and so they parted; the one urging consideration for the people—the other, with excited admiration, scarcely acknowledged to himself. More than once he turned back and waved his hand towards the window, and then proceeded, carefully guided by the treasure-seeker, who led him beneath the shadow of old walls and mouldering fragments, which showed how extensive the strange, shapeless building must once have been, straggling and frowning by the side of that lonely lake, and backed by these grim mountains, without shelter or vegetation. And then, to prevent his crossing the bridge, which, from its immense height, might have exposed them to observation even in the night, Matthew walked

for some time along the border of the river, that roared and rushed on its mad course, as if merry at escaping restraint in the tranquil lake—while, taking Edward's hand, they stepped one after the other over some huge stones, that were but seldom crossed even by the mountaineers. Matthew, who appeared to have collected his senses in a marvellous manner, once left Edward on the margin of the water, to ascend to a cabin that could not have been distinguished from the shingle of the mountain but for the light which a turf fire emitted. He returned, but not until Edward's patience was nearly exhausted, having “kindled his pipe,” and told him, that there were only the women and children “up there,” for the “boys” were all gone; the woman was weeping bitterly, for she knew, she said, there was much danger about; the corpse candles had been dancing over the river all the night before, and every inch of her candle ran into winding-sheets; when she rose in the morning, she found three crickets perished on the hearth-stone, and the dead hand never let her sleep all night, knocking cross knocks on the door. Her husband, “a quiet man, as ever broke the world's bread,” had gone away with a stranger that morning; and if the schoolmaster walked ten miles, she did not think he'd find any but women wherever he went; she was sure they were gathering the men for no good; and the treasure-seeker, whose simplicity had been quite satisfied by wondering how Mr. Spencer came “at the back of God speed,” never asked, or even thought a question on the subject; never imagining, that he more than any knew the cause of the movement that had driven the men from their peaceful homes.

“Can we not get on faster, and how far are we from Spencer Court?” he inquired, after achieving the summit of a mountain, which he believed to be the one whose peak he had caught sight of from Ellen's window.

“It's weary miles yet to Spencer Court,” was the reply. “But in the bend of the valley yonder, is Dean Graves', that's not five miles all out; but I mustn't go there, they'd be asking me about Miss Ellen, and I mustn't tell, and my memory is feeble, though my heart is true; I might do mischief where I meant good, so I'll not go near them.”

“But I have no such fear, so let us cross the country in that direction,” said Edward, “and they will not question me about her, I am sure of that.”

While they were journeying in the moonlight, through a country in some places densely populated, although not a man throughout the district slept that night in his own home, Ellen, now that reaction after her excitement was come, wept more bitterly than she had ever wept before, within those walls; there was something inexpressibly horrid in her over-night feelings, in being almost alone, alone but for the presence of a couple of mountain boys, with “Sister Anne,” upon whom the crime of infant murder was stamped. Her brother's prolonged absence boded

evil, nor was she as indifferent to the fate of the devoted Louis, as she had been to his love. She would have rejoiced beyond all telling if her humble friend Biddy had been with her, but she had gone to attend some cousin's funeral; then she reproached herself for not expressing gratitude for Edward's kindness—what must he think of her? then again, a sort of terror crept through her veins lest by aiding his escape, she had brought her brother into harm. But in the midst of this chaos, the tones of Spencer's voice, so rich in tenderness, would return to her ear, and strike upon her heart; the conviction, that he would indeed be kind to the poor, whose future comfort—whose very existence depended upon him; the generosity of his intentions—all soft, kindly thoughts would soothe and comfort her, as she gazed into the darkness which so soon had hid him from her sight. More than once she contrasted him with another; with him, to whom she had been all that man ever dreams of when he loves; who had cherished her every word and look, when she, an unconscious girl, warmed into a still stronger patriotism by the injustice or indifference of the English to Irish suffering and Irish virtue, and poured out her whole heart to him; who listened at first—because he loved—and afterwards loved what he had listened to; who failed to win her—why? it is impossible to tell. Perhaps, because his love, instead of rendering him eloquent, sealed his lips; perhaps, because, as his reason became fettered by affection, hers grew calm; perhaps, because her lofty mind could only bow to one more lofty! And yet that was not it; it was simply one of love's mysteries that are never read—she knew it not herself; but in that brief interview, the image of Edward Spencer had sunk deeper into her heart than any upon whom her eyes had rested, or could ever rest again.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE ROUTE TO THE PASS.

EDWARD SPENCER and the schoolmaster parted before daybreak, after guiding him within sight of the avenue which led to the Glebe.

"I'll keep about that ould castle in the bend of the valley," said Master Mat, "I'll fill up my time rooting under the stones, or clearing the moss out of the signs and letters on the old tombs *beyant*; for there's an ancient burying-place near it, and they never wonder at seeing poor Matthew about ruins; or maybe, I'll take a sleep somewhere, for it's worn to death I am with the thramping; and if you should want me, you'll know where to find me without any trouble—only don't tell. You can get into the house, Sir, by your leave, or with your leave, for there isn't any one in the country meddles or makes with the Dean, and the never a lock is turned in his door; he has a fortune, you know, of his

own, and hasn't looked for a farthing of tithe these five years, and is a real pacificator—constantly coming betwixt them and harm ; so they let him alone ; ” and then the simple creature kissed Edward's hand, and added a few words of apology. “ I've been bad company for your honour, not all as one as I used to be long ever ago in your uncle's time, when I'd the classics at the top of my tongue, and could divert you with algebra, or astronomy, or discourse you in Latin, or have told you the names of every star in the heavens as they looked down upon us, and we breaking our hearts under them. Wonderful things are them stars ! But it seems as if my maning and memory are gone, though I've the heart to the good still, only it troubles me more than it used ; it is mighty hard to have the heart to *feel*, and want the head to *think*—but it's the will of God ! it's the will of God ! We must set the one against the other. Some men seem to have heads only for ill, like Abel Richards, and some, all as entirely for good ; and more times I wonder, if it's real life I'm in, or if all I have seen and known in this world is nothing but a dream, from which I shall wake—the Lord above knows when ! ”

There was a tone of such intense melancholy in the school-master's voice, and an air of so much tenderness and feeling about him as he spoke, that Edward—always alive to whatever needed cheering, and with a sympathy which he felt he could indulge in, without being subjected to the well-bred ridicule that awaits every genuine demonstration of the heart in ordinary society—pressed Matthew's hands between his own.

“ No, no ! my old friend,” he said ; “ no, no ! it is all reality ; and so you will find it very soon, when the school-house is done up, and refurnished, and you have ordered new books, and globes, and maps, and have all your boys about you again.”

“ Thank you ! thank you ! that will be well. But we'll keep some of the old books—old books are like the faces of old friends—we'll keep *them*. Miss Nelly used to put sand in my ink bottle, and place ‘ Robinson Crusoe ’ or ‘ The Adventures of Freeny ’ before me, when I wanted Virgil ; but she's steadier now—she's much steadier—she wouldn't do that now. Avourneen deelish ! ” he exclaimed, suddenly, “ what am I thinking of ? No, Mr. Spencer ! no, Sir ! I could stay easy in the school now worse than ever—wanting *HER* ; and as to boys, when I came back this last time through the sickness and the disturbance, I asked for my best Grecian, and my little poet—and my square-root ; and they told me of three graves—not green—in the churchyard ; there are my scholars now. No, good Sir ! I'm not fit to teach—I'm hardly fit to learn ; so I'll just wait the Lord's pleasure, and pray that if I do no good, I may do no harm ; and who knows, if I'm shut out from this world, I may see other things, and find what *I know* is hidden ! God never takes one sense, without quickening another. God be with you, Sir—I'll be below at the ruin ; you'll mind her words, Sir. God be with you evermore ! ”

Poor Matthew had spoken more at parting than during his

entire companionship ; he seemed afraid to trust his wandering thoughts to words, only giving them vent at intervals, and then sealing his lips until recalled by some event or observation.

The gate, leading to the deanery, was open, as Irish gates generally are, and Edward felt it awkward to enter at such an unusual hour ; he knocked at the door of the lodge, hardly expecting to receive an answer, but much to his astonishment, a woman, dressed as if she had sat up all night, opened it immediately. He inquired at what time the family rose in the morning. She told him 'early.' Would she ask her husband (she had a young infant in her arms) to walk with him to the house. Her manner became confused, and after some hesitation she replied, that "he wasn't in ; he had just gone out on a little business, that was all ; she'd go down with his honour herself, only she couldn't leave the gate."

Edward smiled at her sudden care of an open gate, and proceeded alone down the avenue ; he had not gone many yards before a child pattered after him, her little rosy feet wet with the early dew as she ran through the grass that sloped from each side of the carriage-drive.

"Plase yer honour, mammy says, don't tell the minister that daddy wasn't in, as he'd go mad with her intirely, and mammy couldn't hinder him."

"And where is he gone, my little maid ?"

"Bedad, Sir, I don't know, only he went on his knees not to be axed to go, and they would have kilt him dead if he didn't ; and mammy says maybe he'll never come back ; and don't tell the minister, plase, Sir, for he'd go mad, so he would, and so would the young ladies, and they're the darlins of the world to us—so they are."

He gave the child a shilling, which doubtless she construed into a promise, and pondered during the remainder of his short walk, on the omnipotence of a system that so completely held in despotic thralldom all who came within its influence.

The house was one of those, so common in Ireland, placed in a situation of extreme beauty, but without any exterior ornament. No verandahs garlanded with roses, no trellise covered with climbers, no vases, no bowers, no indications of taste ; but the prospect was of surpassing loveliness—meadows and river, trees, ruins, hill and dale, mingled together, girded by mountains in the distance, all glowing in the increasing light of a summer morning. It was necessary to ascend some steps to reach the hall door ; and as Edward did so, he perceived, through the half-closed shutters of a bow-windowed room, a ray of light, struggling feebly with the broad beams of morning. When he stood on the top step he looked in ; and though the smouldering wicks of the candles showed how much they had been neglected, he saw that a lady in deep mourning was writing at the table, while Dean Graves, looking at least ten years older than when they last met, was seated in a large chair opposite. He knocked, still keeping his

eyes fixed on the window. The lady started and turned round; and Edward Spencer's heart beat more loudly, to his thinking, than his hand had knocked—for it was Lady Mary O'Brien. The Dean, after a little hesitation, advanced to the window, and opened the shutters fully. He immediately recognised Edward, and hastened to admit him, leading him, however, to a different apartment from that which he had quitted. If Lady Mary felt any emotion at this visit, unexpected as it must have been, she soon overcame it, for Edward had hardly exchanged ten words with the Dean when she entered; nor did she permit time for the usual greeting, when she inquired if Edward had received her letter.

“And delivered it,” was the reply.

“Not yourself,” said Lady Mary. “Surely *you* did not venture there?”

“I would have ventured much farther, Lady Mary, to execute any commission of yours.”

Lady Mary's cheek flushed. She hesitated, and became more and more agitated, until, making a decided effort at self-command, she said, “It was most kind, most generous, but most imprudent. I should never have thought of hazarding your life in such a manner. I should have dreaded their discovering you.”

“I did not permit them to discover me, I discovered myself.”

“And—did you see *him*?”

“Certainly.”

“But are you sure you were not deceived?”

“Not if your description was correct; the mark on the wrist, and all—”

Lady Mary sank into a chair.

“No, no!” she said to Dean Graves, who evidently thought she was fainting; “no, no! I am not one of your fainting ladies, my reverend friend; no, no! I am overwhelmed by thinking of the peril to which so kind a friend was exposed.”

Oh! how Edward Spencer felt at that moment; how he longed to throw himself at her feet; but the mystery as to “Who was Louis?” restrained him.

“Did they demand no pledge from you? Did Louis give you no letter—no message? How did you come here? Did you know I was here?”

“I must request your patience: they demanded no pledge,” he replied, assuming a gaiety he did not feel, “but they bandaged my eyes—made a clear case of the abduction of an English gentleman by the wild Irish, and sent me away to the ‘Castle Dangerous’ you were so good as to hint at in the steamer. The gentleman your ladyship calls ‘Louis,’ took the letter, but gave no message, save to those to whose custody he confided me; and when I came here, I had no expectation of this honour—no hope of seeing any one except the Dean, whom I wished to speak to in private.”

“A thousand pardons!” said Lady Mary, rising. “I ought to

apologise for this intrusion ; I have already caused you much trouble, and most unintentionally exposed you to much danger. My usual messenger was nowhere to be found. If you remember, you invited the trouble, and God knows, I would not have exposed you to the peril you have escaped from—no ! not to have saved my own life."

"Only to save a life dearer than your own," said the haughty Edward, while a fierce jealousy struggled in his bosom.

"You say truly, the life I would save—the noble creature I would recall—is far dearer to me than my own fevered and disappointed existence can ever be ; God knows this, and knows how deeply—deeply grateful—I am to you at this moment." She held out her hand to Edward, who, without seeming to notice the movement, bowed.

"Nay," she said ; "do not look so stately and so English, I really think you are worse than ever ! is the bow never unbent ?" At that moment, Edward Spencer felt the extension of that small white trembling hand towards him a positive insult ; he wished she were a man, that he might call her out ; he wondered how he could have been such a fool ; he thought every thing, but he said nothing, and suffered Lady Mary's hand to fall to her side, without accepting its pressure.

"I must say !" observed the lady, drawing herself up, and looking as dignified as noble descent for six generations could entitle a beautiful woman of five-and-twenty to look ; "I must say, that having conferred a favour upon me, you have made me feel its value."

"It is not that ; oh, indeed, it is not that !" exclaimed Edward, as he attempted to prevent her leaving the room ; but she was gone.

"I am sorry to see this," said the Dean. "Lady Mary has been sitting up all night, writing and suffering ; she had no idea of what you undertook, and her mind is sadly distressed, as you may suppose. She was very anxious to see the Master of Macroom, but unfortunately, he and a number of gentlemen went to Bantry yesterday for a day or two ; there is very little doubt from the nature of information obtained in a very singular manner, that they will find the leaders of this unhappy disturbance, and a great quantity of arms and ammunition, which, we fear, has been contributed by foreign malecontents, at one end or other of the Pass of Keim-an-eigh ; the information is so circumstantial and so well authenticated that they departed full of hope. The military at Bantry will act under their control ; one bold stroke will, I trust, convince the deluded people of their folly ; in the meantime, poor Lady Mary is in a state of distraction."

"It is much to be regretted," said Edward, "that the object of this solicitude is not more worthy."

"So it is ; but what can be done ? It is no use reasoning with women about the worthiness of a beloved object ; the more worthless it is, the more their sympathy is excited ; and because all

the world thinks badly of that one particular person, they will oppose the world."

"Their obstinacy"—said Edward.

"Or heroism," interrupted the Dean—"in her case it is particularly unfortunate."

Mr. Spencer was so bewildered by his unexpected interview with Lady Mary, and the strange turn it had taken, that it was some time before he could collect his thoughts or subdue his feelings so as to speak of the object of his visit. It will be remembered that he only heard a portion of what Byrne purposed, but it was quite sufficient to lead him to the belief that the Whiteboy emissaries had succeeded in deceiving the gentry, and that it was more than probable the sun which had just risen would set on a dreadful tragedy. Edward stated to the Dean all he had heard, and all he believed on the subject. The clergyman heard him with attention, and made him repeat Byrne's observation, saying that he knew the man, and knew him to have been rendered desperate as well as determined, by the fate of his two sons and the death of their mother, who expired at the foot of the gallows on which her youngest born was executed; but he did not place the same confidence in the strength of Whiteboy power, or the extent of Whiteboy influence that Edward did; he did not—even with the knowledge of the *ruse* by which Murtogh had wiled the soldiers from Glen Flesh at the very time when Louis was concealed there—he did not even then believe that the gentry who were still residents in the county and so large a number of the military could be decoyed, as Mr. Spencer seemed to apprehend they would be; and he talked of the "limited number" of the incendiaries until Edward assured him that even his own gate-keeper had been, it might be, forced to abandon his trust in a way which left no doubt, at least on his mind, of his destination. It became evident to Edward that the Dean was now alarmed for his friends, though still clinging to the belief that they could not have been deceived. But what was to be done? It would have been unsafe to withdraw any more soldiers from Kenmare or Macroom, nor could Edward state the specific time for the encounter from which he apprehended so much danger. There were some half-dozen soldiers left to garrison a gentleman's house within two miles of the Glebe, who had requested such protection; it might even then be too late to give such warning as could put them on their guard; still the effort must be made, and at once.

After much deliberation it was agreed that they should partake of some hurried refreshment and ride rapidly in the direction of the pass of Keim-an-eigh, and so on to Bantry. The Dean was certain of the fidelity of two of his servants who, as Protestants, could not belong to the insurgents.

"I dare not let Lady Mary know of our intention, much less of the cause which prompts it, for she would insist on riding with us. Nothing daunts her spirit," observed the clergyman.

At any other time, Edward Spencer would not have failed to have thought over, in his usual spirit of pondering, the extreme want of feminine delicacy which characterised such an intent : but the excitement under which he laboured ; the anxiety he felt, it must be confessed, for both parties ; the devotion he had witnessed in these misguided men for what they considered right ; the constitutional determination of all Englishmen to preserve the law inviolate ; added to the horror that all must feel at the idea of fellow-creatures being *betrayed* to death—agitated and yet roused him so effectually, that he neither felt hunger nor fatigue but an overwhelming desire to mount and away, hoping, despite the impossibility of the case, that he might yet be in time to put his friends on their guard. Nor was Dean Graves less anxious ; if Edward's apprehensions were well founded, those in danger were the friends of the last forty years of his life—or even more dear, those who had grown up to manhood beneath his eyes, whose parents had been the companions of his youth. Still, there was little to apprehend from a guerilla-like ambush ; were it not for the training of the last few months, they would fly, as they always did, before the first volley. Both were agitated by contending feelings, which they endeavoured to conceal from each other. Mr. Spencer wished the Dean to take a couple of soldiers from the garrisoned house, but he objected ; two soldiers, he thought, could be but of little service, if service were needed, and their appearance would only excite the suspicions of the peasantry. No ; his servants should be armed as fully as themselves, and all well-mounted, they would at once hasten on their way. Lady Mary had retired to her room, sending her host word, that she was so exhausted as to require rest, and imploring him to let her know immediately whatever occurred.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE TEMPTER AND HIS TOOL.

THE trap designed for the gentry of the country by Byrne was skillfully laid and well baited ; long before he developed his plan to the meeting at Gougane Barra, he had cunningly caused reports to reach the ears of the magistrates of such a nature as to draw their attention to the neighbourhood. So far the genius of Byrne carried him ; but no farther. There are many minds sufficiently endowed to lay a small snare, to work up a villainous scheme to a certain point, yet are incapable of conducting it far enough—not from any humane delay or virtuous withdrawal, but, though full of the wish to do, incompetent to the power of achievement. Such was the case with Byrne ; it was within his compass to increase outrage, and to mislead directly and indirectly ; he saw that the parts adjacent to the lakes and mountains known to themselves, would be a capital field for slaughter

*somewhat*, and that some “burnings” would be certain to bring on an investigation, particularly if any of the retainers of Lord Bantry’s family were outraged. “If we can,” he said, “get them into the pass of Keim-an-eigh we can slay them like sheep, young and old together.”

But Louis immediately observed, “Not unless you can keep them there.”

Lawrence saw at once the force and truth of this observation; and while he permitted Byrne to play his under part in the cause, which so far he was well calculated to manage, he resolved to induce Louis to visit the pass, and survey it attentively; the blow if struck must be struck at once, and if struck effectually, he believed, even after the excitement of the midnight meeting had subsided, the whole of the “Beautiful West” would be their own.

Louis, always facile, was again led forward, by the romance and daring of the undertaking, to act as he had but recently determined he never would again—under such circumstances.

While Edward and the schoolmaster were treading their way through the mountains, the flower of West Country chivalry were assembled in Lord Bantry’s house; many of them Edward had met at Macroom; there were others from the dark-eyed kingdom of Kerry; between fifteen and twenty gentlemen, brave, careless, handsome Irishmen, “up to any thing;” as eager to hunt a Whiteboy as a fox, and in many instances stimulated by indignation and resentment to a loyal duty. They laughed, and talked, and sung; they had their butt also; kicking rude jests at Abel Richards, whom a party of the younger ones had forced to accompany them, though they well knew he would have slunk into a rabbit-hole rather than expose himself to danger unless urged thereto by some great purpose of his own; and he sat at the lower end of “My Lord’s” board, smiling at foolish jests when they fell from the lips of rank, casting up his eyes habitually at the bounding oaths the utterance of which degraded many a high-born gentleman, and falling into occasional abstraction as he looked into the deep and impure pitfalls of his own mind, where a multitude of evil thoughts were in perpetual motion, like tadpoles in a stagnant pool. He afforded rare sport, however, to some who, as he became more under the influence of the potent whiskey, extracted his tracts from his pocket and substituted ribald songs in their stead; while others, up to “the joke,” when he had grown apparently still more intoxicated, entreated that Mr. Richards would bestow on them one of his “Roads to Grace,” or “Solemn Calls,” or “Patient Spirits,” or “Besoms for sweeping out Popery,” and then, after receiving what he imagined to be the sought-for treasures, proclaimed with mock solemnity the sad backsliding of their sanctified friend.

The gentlemen had gone through a hard day’s work, and, prone to after-dinner indulgence, thought little of the plan formed for their starting by daybreak, to where they had been led to believe the mysterious leader and his two principal lieutenants would be

found. It was extraordinary how all the information they obtained led to the same conclusion, and how carefully every little point was elucidated, and every difficulty cleared up; the chain of evidence rendered complete, not by downright positive disclosure—that would at once have excited suspicion, but by scraps and atoms, sufficient to mislead cooler and wiser heads; some indeed, with the Master of Macroom and Abel Richards, thought it possible they might be disappointed, and that they might return without either arms or insurgents; but, on the other hand, they *might* find what they sought, and it was worth the trial.

Although every peasant in the country knew how some of the very same party had been foiled in Glen Flesk, they themselves, with all their boasted knowledge of the country and the people, had no idea of it, but imagined that their anticipated prisoner had really escaped them from the ruined castle of the Macarthy.

While the house resounded with revelry, and a party of soldiers, waiting the commands of their officer, made a guard-room of the servants' hall, or bivouacked on the lawn within hail of the most varied and most lovely scenery the Almighty has permitted His creatures to enjoy in the most beautiful portion of his beautiful world,—our old acquaintance, Doyle of the Cars, was stationed at a small grating, almost concealed by brushwood—if an accumulation of shrubs may be so called; he was stretched along the ground, so completely concealed, that no creature, except a dog, could have discovered him; he had lain there motionless for several hours, and at last a ray of light came through the grating, which it was evident he expected, for he muttered “Glory! there's life in us yet, any way.”

“Doyleen!” whispered a face, close to the bars.

“Success at harvest!” was the rejoinder.

“We're right, jewel; it's dead with the could ye are, only it's worth waiting for. We couldn't get round the fellow that had the orders, until we got him completely overtaken with the drop; and then Betty slipped the orders out, and a pack of cards in; won't he be dancing mad at brake of day, for that's the time for marching?”

“Anything else?”

“Ould Richards is in it, and the young gentlemen swear he shall go with them; I never saw *him* so overtaken before, for in general he's too 'cute for the whiskey.”

“Pisen him, as you would a rat,” said the carman, in evident disgust.

“It would be a sin to let him off that way, for then, sure, it's in his bed he'd die.”

“True for ye; I'm so glad Mr. Spencer's not in it, I could not have stood any danger to him—I'd have died first; and the ould King of Macroom, I'll own I'd be long sorry anything happened him.”

“‘He's roaring alive’ with the gout; and sure, it's a blessed case the Dean's not in it,” was the reply, “for he's the country's

friend. But I'd have invented some way to save his life, or lose my own; I've not forgotten how he saved my mother's life, and she in the fever; I had forty inventions on the tip of my tongue to save him, if he had the luck to be with the rest."

"Glory to the saints for that," was the reply; "the rest must take their chance, and I'll carry the news to Macarthy;—is all clear?"

"No," said the voice of Betty Doyle, who had been promoted from the service of "Mrs. Attorney" to some inferior post at Glengariff Castle; "no, faix, the soldiers—the devil's good luck and their own to them—are all straggling round the wall you have to cross, and the life was frightened out of me when I saw it; three of us girls had been doing our best to 'tice them in, jigging and dancing, and singing; but they've grown obstinate, and not rollicking with the whiskey, and I believe, to my soul, there's something lurking near this bit of a quare ruined place. Oh, mercy, if there's not one of them with his head over the wall; down for your life!"

The girl had hardly thus spoken, when they heard the click of a gun-lock, and the head kept rising and rising above the wall; "Who's there?—speak, or I'll fire."

"I'm here," said Lord Bantry's under-butler; "I'm here, getting wine out for his lordship—that's the light you see!"

The soldier spoke in a lowered voice to his comrades, and then added, "If there's room for the light, there's room for a bottle of wine, and I'll come for it."

Betty groaned and trembled; her brother's life hung upon a thread.

"Give me the paper," whispered the servant, hoping Doyle would hear him; "if that's found we're all as good as murdered." But Doyle had moved himself away, crawling into thicker cover.

The soldier was half over the wall, when the girl cried out, "Never mind him, Sir; it's only the second best sort of wine that's kep here, what his lordship allows the quality when they're so far gone as not to be able to tell one kind from another; but if you'll get round to the other side, I'll be with you in two minutes with some of the rale sort. A little window it is, as close to the ground as this, just room to give you a couple of bottles."

"And a couple of kisses?" queried the soldier, who had had enough of drink to make him desire more.

"Ay, faix," she replied. "Will you go?"

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush!" said the soldier, as he cleared the wall, and fell at full length on the tangled grass. Both the servants trembled; but Betty, lifting the grating, forced an admirable laugh, and inquired if she should come and pick him up. The man endeavoured to laugh himself; and stumbling forward hit his foot against Doyle's brogue, whose leg projected from beneath the bushes. "Turn yer light this way, I've struck something."

Betty turned the candle so as to cast the light in an opposite direction, while she said, "Was it as hard as your own heart, Sir, dear! Here, take it quick; and, oh, for the love of mercy, be off with yerself as fast as shot, for here's Mr. Lynn, the head-butler, coming."

He muttered sundry oaths, and withdrew, Betty promising to meet him at the window round the corner. Doyle ejaculated his favourite exclamation of "Glory," and the under-butler retreated, while Betty poured all the information she had obtained during the day into her brother's ear, who was soon able to withdraw, having heard the soldiers summoned from straggling by a sharp roll on the drum.

While this important manœuvring, managed with such untaught skill by the sharp-sighted and ready-witted underlings, was proceeding, Abel Richards, having escaped from the mirth and mischief of his party, was engaged in deep conference with Peter the Peeler.

They met in a curious room hung round with various implements of the chase. One large window commanded a view of the bay—matchless in the world for beauty; let any who doubt this bold assertion visit it by moonlight, and gazing from that window, say if it be not so. Richards paused there for a few minutes, waiting for Peter, heedless of the loveliness upon which he looked, yet revelling in the cool air which fanned his heated brow.

Abel Richards, like most of the men of his time and class, was fond of drinking—fond of "the stiff tumbler"—and at one period of his life had been proud of having a head sufficiently strong to bear a great many of them; but as it was his object, on that particular evening, to amuse the young gentry at his own expense rather than to push himself forward, he saved himself much trouble, and continued to make observations, by suffering them to suppose he was "overtaken," when he was certainly more sober than usual. He was an excellent actor, and fond as he was of whiskey-punch, could resist it whenever he had a purpose in view.

"How fresh and well you look, Mr. Richards, Sir," said Peter; "why they have it outside you wor done up two hours ago."

Richards smiled.

"Don't be smiling that way, Sir; if it's pleasing to you, I'd rather see the wickedest frown that ever came upon your face than such a smile as that—bedad I would!"

"Have you any trace of the girl?"

"I have, and I have not; there's no use in your getting mad with me now, Mr. Richards; sure you ought to know yourself, that it's no easy matter to track even a girl that would be taken away to be married—let alone such a case as this—when Lawrence Macarthy's known to wish to keep her up, and she herself is as willing to hide, as others are to hide her. I knew how the people would laugh at the reward; *that* would never get trace or

track. I can't, for the life of me, think why you bother yourself so much about it—what is it to you? Sure you can't make so much as an acre of land by it, and you're only sending good money after bad; and if you'd sit down on a hob for a year or two, and not raise your little finger, Lawrence is just the fellow before his hair is gray, or there's an old bone in his body, that will work his own head into a halter."

"And what's that to me unless I place it there? will you answer me that?" said Richards, while pacing up and down the room; "what, I say to you, is that to me, unless I place it there? I have myself chained up wild Bess, my terrier, that I may crush with my *own* heel the rat that revels in my barn—*crush it myself!* Unless I put the rope round Lawrence Macarthy's neck, *I shall die hungry!*" The expression of his face terrified the tool he had so often worked with.

"Well," he said, with feigned composure, "every man to his fancy, and I'm not the boy to stand in my own light; I swear to you that neither are out of the country; she's hid somewhere up the mountains, I'm sure of that; and I'm also certain that Lawrence, and that gentleman-trainer they've got among 'em, are down about Inchageela or Gougane. They say Mr. Spencer, of Spencer Court, young, 'hot and cold,' as they call him, has been spirited away too; there's a whisper within the last half hour that he's missing—maybe murdered in a bog-hole by this time!" Peter garnished his intelligence with an idea of his own, which produced an instantaneous change in his employer's manner.

"You don't mean it, do you?" said Richards, gleefully rubbing his hands, "you don't really mean that young Spencer has been trapped? I'm glad of it! I'm thankful for it!—what right had he to be liberal? He would be his own agent, would he! he would judge for himself, would he! and be tied to no party! He'll the same thing as turn me out of the best room at *our own* hotel in Cork, will he?—and give half guineas to papist jades on board steam-ships, will he? and trust to the people, will he?—the 'fine peasantry!' I hope they piked him, Peter." Peter turned away, while Abel again rubbed his hands; "What good has it done him to call himself a member of the church, and insult it, by hoisting rebel colours on his servant men!"

"It *was* a sin!" said the spy.

"Ay, and dine one day with a priest! and the next day with a minister! there was a public sinner; what has he got by it, I wonder?"

"The ould story, yer honour, of between the two stools—"

"Right!" exclaimed Richards, rising in his mirth, "there never was any one who looked at both sides of a road, that didn't get bogged in the middle—in Ireland. I had a little inclination once myself to try keeping in with the people, and working my way at the same time with the tea and tracts, but it wouldn't do—no, Sir; a man who is not of a party, in Ireland,

has no back ; he is doubted by both, abused by both, and would be murdered by both ; there's great success in going through the country with one eye shut. Are you sure he is dead, my good fellow ? it will be a fine lesson to the world if he is—a fine lesson—people believing they're safe unless they take land ! I could grind the soul out of any one who talks of being safe with the peasantry, or goes to bed and to sleep with unbarred doors, that I could—but are you certain he's dead ?”

“ I'm sure, since yer so glad of it, Mr. Richards, I hope it's true ; and they say he was to be married to Lady Mary O'Brien. I mind the time in the old master of Spencer Court's life, when Lady Mary's brother was mighty sweet upon Miss Ellen, and they said his father was like to go mad about it not being a fit match.”

“ A parcel of benighted papists,” replied Abel ; “ but Miss Ellen never cared for him—she soon sent him out of the country.”

“ I'm thinking so. And yet, who's the fine trainer that's been marshalling and marching the men by night ?”

“ Stuff ! ” exclaimed Richards, who had no faith in any purpose which self-interest, according to his idea thereof, did not stimulate, and consequently was no judge of the more chivalrous feelings that warm men into action. “ He held his majesty's commission—he was no foreign officer. It's some Frenchman or Spaniard they've got among 'em. But your news of Master 'Hot and Cold,' who cast my 'babes of grace' on the floor, and told me he'd be his own agent, and judge for himself,—your news of his falling among the Philistines elated me, and I almost forgot what I had to say. I'm sorely tried ; I'm often sorely tried ; those young ruffians within try me. There's hardly one of them upon whose property I have not a grip, and yet they'll set me up as a laughing-stock, and ask me for Lawrence Macarthy, and if I remember the funerals, and what are eggs by the dozen ! But I'll have my revenge of them, the yelping curs ! one of these days ; but not the revenge that I'll have of Lawrence Macarthy ! There isn't a trouble in the world you have, Peter, that I won't take off you, if you'll just let me get the clutch of my own hand on the collar of his coat, or let me once cover him with my pistol ! ”

“ The lease of the seven acres—three lives and thirty-one years, the three lives my own and my two girls—you said you'd do that, Sir, at ten shillings an acre.”

“ It's worth three pounds.”

“ Or three pounds ten, Sir, I'll not deny it,” answered the peeler ; “ but the value is nothing to the bargain, quite true. Indeed, unless I got a bit of land dog-chape, I'd not trouble the country at all, for it's not comfortable to be walking the road expecting every breath you draw off the mountain may be your last.”

“ I'm as bad off in that way as you, Peter ; but I don't mind it, if I can only punish the scoundrels.”

"You're a public man and a great patriot," said Peter; "but there's only one name through the country for me—only one! The lease of the seven acres, Sir, is for setting Lawrence, dead or alive."

"Not dead!" interrupted Abel Richards. "One carcase is the same as another; no, not dead. I must either shoot him myself, or lodge him myself between the stone walls of a gaol; I must convict him by the evidence of his own sister. There was a time, Peter, when I loved that girl, and he insulted me on it; that came soon on the back of the funerals. Every thing I did in the country got the wind of the word through him and his sister: a penniless, houseless, marauder, with his silver-mounted rifle and his dog on every wild hill side, and blessed at every cabin door! The very gentry that scorned him, believed the words *he* spoke of *me*; there isn't a girl in the country that doesn't turn the bright beam of her eye into a curse when I pass her, and all through him; and then he heated the country into a furnace which at last consumed my house, and was disappointed only because I did not perish therein. And now, if it costs my life, I'll have my revenge! I'll have it in a way that will crush his heart, if not his spirit, and sink his lady-sister to her grave. I'll have her in the witness-box, and him in the dock—then—then, Peter, you scoundrel, Abel Richards will have his revenge! And it's all the law—for the sake of the law and justice, that's it, my Peter! I'm only the instrument!" And according to his old habit he turned up his eyes: then after a pause, Peter answered him.

"I'll strike the bargain for Lawrence, Sir; but as to Miss Ellen, it's just one of the things I'd rather have no call to, and that's the truth. The blessing of the whole country is over her, and if you want her brought forward you must get some one else to seek her; and sure enough, I wonder ye wouldn't see, Mr. Richards, Sir, that every one would be agin' yer bringing her for such a purpose after saving yer own life that night."

It would be impossible to depict the expression which gathered darkly and heavily over the countenance of Abel Richards while Peter thus spoke. He strode up to the spy, rested his hands on his shoulders, and looking him steadily in the face, while he drew his own close and more closely to him, hissed forth his words, as a serpent hisses when it poisons.

"Then you'll hang, Peter—I tell you, you shall hang. I'm not unreasonable nor cruel; but if you will not work for the law, the law won't protect you; and if I tell all I know of you the law *can't* protect you. So find her, Peter—find her; I want to see them together again. If you don't find them both I withdraw my acres."

"As to hanging me, Mr. Richards," said the peeler, drawing back, "it's all *bathershin*; there's not one of the gentlemen would hear to it, just for the sake of their own party; there's not one would have me touched—I know that much, any how. No, no!"

they'd laugh at your asking it, Sir. I'd rayther have nothing to do with Miss Ellen, as I have said before ; there'll be no blessing about it."

" Psha, Peter ! why what a fool you are ! Has Dean Graves been preaching to you one of his middle courses ?" said Richards, shaking him. " When did *we* work for blessings, can you tell me that ? I don't want any harm to come to Miss Ellen. She has treasonable papers in her holding, and I only want her to speak the truth. If it was lies I wanted her to tell, you might think it right since you've taken to truth, Peter ; but it's for the sake of the law, and it's to keep the country at peace, that's all I want ; as far as she goes, I have no ill-will to her. And there's Grim Dennis Bradley's growing into a hard man, and would be glad to undertake the search if it was only to make a reputation for himself ; for as to the little thing that settled him with the people —the information I managed to get out of him, you know—that was all plain work ; no proof of genius in that, not a bit, though it's in him—I'm sure it's in him ! And it's only for me to draw it out, for I'm proud of Dennis, and fond of him. I managed him beautifully. He was always *soft*, and tender of his reputation, and timid of the people, and no wonder, until I got him fast, and then he did not care what he got over—dash at everything. He does not like thinking ; and though he can't help feeling, why he tries to get over it, and I'd like to encourage him. I'm sure of this, that at this present moment he hasn't such a tender conscience as you have, and I'd as soon lease a few acres of land to Dennis Bradley as to you, if you come to that."

" Dennis Bradley !" repeated Peter in bitter scorn, " even Dennis, or the like of Dennis to me ! that's a grate idea entirely you've got, Mr. Richards. How would he get my experience, I wonder ? How could he understand the ins and outs of the country as I do ? What knowledge has he of people or places ?—it's long before Dennis will have sent out of the country the same number of people that I have ;—it's long before he'll have the face to do what I have done, even to oblige yourself, Mr. Richards :—to swear alibis and serve ejectments, and identify those I never set eyes on, and have a pile of five shilling pieces—that high—for Bible oaths without a vestige of truth in 'em. I tell you what, Mr. Richards, Dennis Bradley will never be the man that I am, for it's not to be expected that he'll have the twenty years' training that I've had, from yourself, and *that's* made me what I am, one that the ould boy himself would be proud of ! Think of that ! I may well cling to a bit of land for the support of my poor girls ; there isn't a man in the country will marry them—fine, handsome girls though they are—a dale too good for me."

" You've talked yourself out of breath for nothing, Peter," said Richards, taking advantage of the fall in his voice, which always succeeded the mention of his children, and their being outcasts from their own humble but high-spirited class ; and quite satisfied that the mention of his unfortunate rival, whom he hated with all

his heart, had determined Peter to do all and every thing he desired. "You've talked yourself out of breath for nothing. I only mentioned him, to prove that if you didn't track these outlaws, somebody else would. To-morrow, if nothing else is done, we'll shake them out of their hiding-holes and about there, and if you're as wakeful as usual, you'll get on the track somehow. Are your trains laid? there's a number of their staunch friends in gaol. Above all, is the coast well guarded?"

"Wonderful! but I don't think they're for escape. I don't think Miss Ellen would leave the country. I think they're only keeping out of the way till it blows over. Miss Ellen has a strong back, with gentle and simple."

"I tell you what, Peter, I think you've been bribed *not* to know where she is."

"Well, for a Christian man, you've evil thoughts, Mr. Richards. I did not know before to-night that you wor as much set on finding *her* as on finding *him*; if I had, I'd have worked her out some way, for a woman's easier traced; but I thought there might be a remembrance about your heart would hinder you from harming her; but I see you can't help it, Sir; it's the chain of evidence, you can't punish him without her."

"That's it, Peter, you see it now!"

"It's all in the line of the law?"

"Exactly! nothing but what we've gone through for less cause."

"Ay, 'deed, that's thrue!"

"And if it's done well and quickly, much within a month from this day, I don't care if I make the seven acres fourteen, at the same rent."

"Yer honour's generous; and now if it'd be plasing to ye, I'd like to know how it was you got round Dennis Bradley *first*; all the country knows what he did; and 'deed," added Peter, looking round with the consciousness of a most villainous superiority, "'deed, though I would not demane myself to compare Dennis to the man of your twenty years' teachings, Mr. Richards, still he's a 'cute fellow—though with a mighty down-heart-broken look. He does not take kindly to it, Mr. Richards; it does not comfort him; and what he gets doesn't grow. I've heard he's taken many a penance on himself, but never had the strength either to go through it, or keep from it—I'd like to hear how you got him *first*."

"I had a great card to play in the country, Peter; I wanted to make them all feel, that Abel Richards could do what no one else could, and I knew that Dennis was in the thick of all the knowledge about the Riband Lodges, and the like; so I went offering bribes—"

"To Dennis?"

"No, you fool! but to every other man I judged was in it, until not one of the whole set would enter my house, and I was as good as proclaimed from the altar that no man should hold any

communication with me—for fear of their morals, Peter—that was it, I suppose ! ” and he laughed, and his miserable satellite echoed the vile chuckle. “ Well, Dennis had a horse to sell, and I caused it to be known that I wanted just such a beast ; and Denny thought it sorrowful that he should lose the market of his horse, for he had ever and always a great turn for turning a penny ; and I observed that once or twice on market-days, Dennis walked the horse past my parlour-window, and stood himself at the corner of the street, as if trying to see me, and yet not liking to venture ; and at last one Saturday he put the horse up, and went *slingeing* past the window, looking in with the tail of his eye ; and at last I threw it up, and told him I wanted to know the price of the horse. So he said, and I told him to come in, and I was sure we would agree ; so after a minute, looking up the street, and down the street, in he came ; and he had not been a minute in hardly, when I slipped away from him, and gave orders to some of my own people to get about and arrest two or three boys—on a charge of administering unlawful oaths. And so I got the hot water and materials—the stuff for a warm tumbler at once ; and after much debating with Dennis, I closed the bargain ; he pocketed the money and his own ruin at the same time. Of course the wind of the word was down about the town that Dennis was in my house ; then my fellows made a great bother about the illegal oaths ; and as soon as I saw some I knew, peeping in at the window, I judged it was all up with Dennis. He had business that I managed should keep him in town that night, and sure enough the boys were so sure he had *sold the Pass* on them, that they burned every thing he had in the world, that very night, taking it for granted he had turned informer. The first light in the morning, he came down to me, calling on me, Peter, as *an honest man*, to come forward and state that he was with me about selling a horse, and nothing else. How I laughed at him ! ‘ I have you, my boy,’ I said, ‘ soul and body ; they *saw* you here, that is quite enough ; they *saw* you here, they knew how I proceeded immediately ; you’re *believed* to be an informer by the whole country ; your life isn’t worth a traneen ; you’re cried through every townland ; I’ll swear to it ! ’ ”

“ Oh, Mr. Richards ! ” exclaimed Peter, “ but you are a great hero entirely.”

“ Dennis fell on his knees—he roared like a great bull ; and I took no notice—except telling him the same thing over and over again ; he *saw* it himself, and felt he was in my power ; ‘ Now,’ said I, ‘ give me your list, and I’ll give you two hundred pounds to take you out of the country ; ’ well, to make a long story short, he did, and the money was paid ; but he lingered about, his wife left him and so did his children ; and he’s marked—like yourself Peter ; but he’s growing very useful, and I don’t think he’s worse off than you are now. By the way,” he continued, carelessly, “ have you ever set Master Mat ? ”

“ There’s none of my boys will have a haporth to do with him ; they’ve a shuperstition about him, and I never can get any good

of them when they hit on a shuperstition. If I thought he had any thing to do with the hiding, I'd set him myself; but he's taken up with Mr. Spencer, and the school-house to be re-done. Indeed, he's a quare man altogether; there's neither good nor harm in him; and it isn't worth our while to be bothering about the likes of him. Besides, he offered to tache my girls—only the scholars threatened to quit if they came into it. You've no curiosity at all about the strange trainer?"

"No, Peter, he's nothing particular to me, neither here nor there; if all that's said is true, you may turn a penny by letting him alone. I'll go on chance with these yelping curs as soon as they're ready, or they'll say I am cowardly, though I don't think we'll have much luck. My eyes won't know rest until Lawrence is safe in the body of Cork goal, and remember, Peter, unless *I* place the rope round his neck, as I told you before, I SHALL DIE HUNGRY!"

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE PASS OF KEIM-AN-EIGH.

THE car-driver had the start of the military by about four hours—quite enough to enable Louis to make his final arrangements. The place of meeting was a ruined cottage within a quarter of a mile of the entrance to the pass, at the end nearest to Glengariff, and where it has by no means the dismal and terrific appearance it assumes when completely a mountain gorge; there Doyle delivered the paper which pointed out the route the military were to take, where they were to defile, and where unite, and how far they were to proceed—unless so and so happened. The scheme had been arranged by one particular magistrate, who in a most unmethodical country was famed for method, and was never satisfied with any plan until he saw how it looked upon paper.

After Louis and Lawrence had counselled together, they proceeded to the entrance of the pass, where Lawrence blew a single blast upon his bugle; this was answered within a few seconds by another, and that, before the echoes had died away, by a third; and so on, until the real call and the echo mingled their wild sounds together in most unearthly music—flying as if by magic influence, now here, now there; above, below, around, from one end of the pass to the other; now seeming to spring up from the foaming river; now, as if the mysterious source of the sea sent forth its waters to accompany some mountain spirit on its way; now bursting from behind a rock; then floating away, making melody among the clouds.

How the people crowded! rushing onward. Truly their agents had worked well together, or such a multitude could not have been congregated beneath the midnight canopy. Rocks, knolls, cataracts, sent forth living creatures; not silently, or calmly,

with thoughtful brows, and steady steps—stealthily, as they answered the summons at Gougane Barra; but they came instinct with life, and the great purpose of Irish life—action. Something was to be dared and done, and that at once; *this* was enough for them; enough at all times. The ready and willing instruments of danger and defiance, with heads throbbing as wildly as their hearts, every nerve thrilling with emotion—they came, they gathered round their leaders, all doubt and coldness vanished, eager and panting for action, for movement, for any thing rather than reflection or repose. In their wild excitement, they forgot for a time their misery, their wretchedness, and were ready to do any thing—the worst subjects and the bravest soldiers in the “world wide.” It is impossible to describe a meeting every way worthy of the desperate, rude, yet magnificent character of the scenery. What a mighty thing it was! hearts beating with the same motive, the same resolve; eyes casting their lightnings into each other, and all buoyant with a hope which they never attempted to define or comprehend; how they hung upon every word that Lawrence uttered, firmly believing in what he said, that before the noon-day sun was up they should be a nation in the sight of Europe!

He no longer reasoned; his style suited his purpose; it was joyous—fiery—fast—and presumptuous, assuming all things done that had yet to be achieved. He assured them that Pastorini was a right prophet, that the hour was come to thrust home their pikes, and if they were but true to themselves, “the West” was all their own; that within an hour the soldiers from Bantry would be in motion, that a party were to scour the country between them and Glengariff, while a few accompanied the gentry by the other road, to return through the pass of Keim-an-eigh, and unite about a quarter of a mile beyond where they stood. “You,” he continued, “my true-footed Doyle of the Cars, take seventy—”

“Too many,” interrupted Louis, “fifty are a hindrance; a man here and there is better as a decoy,—better than a multitude.”

“ Speak on, yourself, then! speak on, yourself!” said the easily offended Lawrence.

“The cause must not be lost through temper,” thought Louis, and continued, while the storm still trembled on Lawrence’s brow: “take fifty of your smartest boys, Doyle—mountain lads—who know every rock and rush of the whole mountain; lie concealed, I need not tell you how, until after scouring the country, where instead of finding those they seek for, they will see the dead ashes and the bright water on every hearthstone—and perhaps, in revenge, burn these as they have burned other cabins; then, when they are lingering about here, waiting for those who are to meet them after their more lengthened round—angry and dispirited, yet more eager for blood than ever—show yourselves gradually, man by man; play round them like flashes

of lightning, draw them on—increasing in number, but carefully—now high—now low—through bog, and up mountain, picking them off whenever you have an opportunity, but not wasting your fire; still leading them on, bit by bit, inch by inch—not showing your strength nor means of escape. Keep them at play as you would a ball on the top of your hurley; never come to close quarters; keep behind the rocks and turf-clamps; tease them all round the mouth of the pass—but not into it; wound the horses—draw them, boys, as a plover does a spaniel on the moor; they would show you no mercy, bear that always in mind, and return them the compliment as an Irishman knows how. Remember, that the great object you have in view, is to scatter the red-coats in the mountains; aggravate them to pursue; the gentlemen, as we know, will come through, expecting to meet them; they like a drag-hunt, but not the danger; they like the sport—perhaps they may have their dogs, in case their other sport fail, but no matter. Doyle, remember you and yours are the decoy at this end; for every once you run away from them now, you will run ten times into them hereafter."

"And you, Byrne," said Lawrence, who did not like to yield the pass altogether to Louis, "take fifty of the stoutest on our roll—is that too many, captain?"

"I should say better a hundred," replied Louis, in a quiet, under tone, "there will be fighting in the pass, where strong men will be needed, and a reserve to pour down will be of great value; the decoy needs skill rather than numbers."

"I have said fifty," answered Lawrence, impetuously, "and it must stand. Take fifty of the strongest on our roll, go to the Red-deer's rock—that big stone which darkens the pass even at noon-tide—from which the fairy Doe sprang, and cleared the gorge, when Fin McCoul and his good dog Bran hunted her for one long summer day. The stone, big as it is, is loose already—the captain says he can shake it with his shoulder—ten men, in as many minutes, will undermine and leave it so; so that at command, you can kick it down, as easily as you send the ball from the bat. Off, my good giant, let ten good spades companion your fifty pikes and firelocks; pick your men, and at once, losing no time, dig away as the treasure-seeker digs for gold; work for the liberty of old Ireland and the honour of Saint Patrick."

"But work carefully," interrupted Louis, "a moment too soon or too late, would destroy us."

"Oh, yes," said Lawrence, with his usual impatience; "of course you must work carefully; and when the rock is ready to rattle down, clap your Kerry-cow's horn to your mouth, and blow me the old Whiteboy blast. Wait quietly until you hear the flourish of my bugle, and then in the name of all the saints, down with the rock; it will fill up the pass as this cork plugs my powder-horn. And then—and then, my brave boys, these *orange bœrens*—those murderers—those middlemen are in our power!—caught—bagged!—those who have thickened the streams of our

own mountains with our blood! Who have rolled our nobles' heads on their scaffolds—who have stolen our lands—who spend our gold in foreign countries—who have bent their gallows trees with the bodies of our strong young men! Who call us the *mere* Irish! Who have trampled our crosses in the dust—scoffed at the blessed Virgin and our holy faith, and insulted our graves—and robbed us of our lands! Byrne has 'ticed them well—baited the trap; there will be no possibility of their joining the military, and we will bar their retreat with a forest of pikes; but the rock will be moved by the power of our friend!"

"Let *him* guide it, then!" growled Byrne; "I tell you, Macarthy, that I'm not going to be a grave-digger up there; I could not stand it. Put me somewhere where I can draw first blood—where I can see the death pains of Abel Richards—or the—the—" his hands twisted round the neck of some imaginary victim, he stamped and foamed like a maniac. "I mean," he said at last, "to leave my bones under the shadow of these mountains—to sell my life; a life for each drop of blood that has been shed of mine. Put me where I can stand in the pass and shout them on; but I will be no hawk perched on high, waiting a signal to stoop on the covey that is fluttering at my feet!"

"This man is mad," whispered Lawrence.

"And will destroy all, if he be not watched," replied Louis.

"It requires a cool head," continued Lawrence. "Will the Sword of Dunboy undertake it?"

"I will," he answered, "and at once."

Immediately after this and a few other matters were arranged, they divided, and in such admirable order, and so effectually was each man secreted by his own grey rock on either side of the defile, that a doctor who had been sent for to attend a woman in her time of danger, rode through, less than an hour afterwards, attended only by his servant, and declared that never before had he felt so awe-struck at the silence and solitude of "The Pass of Keim-an-eigh."

In the early morning the military were of course annoyed and disappointed at their fruitless search, but with them it was, as usual, a matter of business; whereas the gentlemen who had themselves gone to seek for those whose machinations disturbed the peace of the country, and endangered their safety, both collectively and individually, were enraged at finding not only no trace of those they sought, but no living creature in the cabins. They had been fooled, and the anticipation of how their military friends would receive the intelligence, was matter for anything but pleasant speculation; thus, while they, jaded and fatigued, prepared to enter at one end of the pass, it was the business of Doyle and his guerillas to engage the attention of the soldiers at the other, so that time and opportunity might both help the work of destruction.

The most active of "the boys" crept along the edge of the mountains, and under shelter of the rocks and heath, fired a volley

and then fled towards the hills. The commanding officer, not to be caught by this guerilla practice, saw the danger of permitting his small detachment to be scattered in a comparatively unknown neighbourhood, and, while the morning mist hung heavy and low upon the ordinary shadows of the pass, ordered his men not to attempt pursuit, but keep steady on their course.

Doyle, and half-a-dozen chosen fellows, were not to be foiled by this system, but crept sufficiently near to taunt and abuse the red-coats from behind the rocks; and then a few of the soldiers, irritated by the audacity of the Whiteboys, started forward in pursuit, and ascended the mountain; hunting, as they thought, some two or three audacious insurgents, who ran away from the first danger. But it was not so; they achieved no very considerable height, when from amongst the hills and out of the bog-holes, up started the enemy on every side, and a desperate hand-to-hand contest ensued. Numbers effected their retreat; but the unfortunate soldier who a few hours before had rejoiced in the bottle of wine—whether or not his brain still reeled, is a question—was suddenly uplifted by half-a-dozen pikes, and dashed over a crag, from whence he rolled a shapeless mass to the feet of his commanding officer, who found it impossible to restrain his men in their desire to avenge their comrade's death. But the wily assaulters were now further off, shouting and huzzaing, misleading the ears, as Will-o'-the-Wisp does the eyes, of his followers, who follow him nevertheless; and so it was, the soldiers dallied with their provocation; now wallowing in a morass, now galloping up the mountains, to hear the taunts and laughter of their betrayers.

In the meantime, the gentry were straggling into the defile in long and loose array, through a thick atmosphere which even at mid-day is rarely visited by the sunbeams. Lawrence watched with an anxiety amounting to agony, the entrance of the party into the pass; he knew them all, even through that mournful twilight; he knew them all by sight; and it was a relief to him to remember that there was not one who had ever offered him the least courtesy or kindness. He saw the burley shoulders of Abel Richards squared over a horse of hardly less power than the one that perished in the flames, and he heard the taunting laughter of a gay, light-hearted youth, at the occurrence of some jest played upon "the saint." He could easily, he thought, cover him with his rifle; but not yet—not yet! He counted them as he would count ravens on a tree, or crows in a field. He fancied that the beatings of his heart were audible as the ticks of a death-watch so he bent his knee, and crossed himself devoutly on breast and brow. He numbered the seconds, expecting every moment to hear the horn announce that all was done, that the rock was ready to be hurled down across the narrow path, and that then he and his men should rush down upon their victims.

Now, be it remembered, the gentry had about a mile to pass from their side the entrance before they reached the spot where

the dreadful rock impended. At the rate they were proceeding, ten or twelve minutes would have brought them to it; and still onward the horsemen wound their toilsome way through the rocky pass, the river swollen by recent rains, dashing and foaming by their side. It is believed that, at this instant, Byrne became no longer able to master his emotion, when looking down he beheld Richards riding beneath him. The bereaved old man saw *now* in his power the very man who had robbed him of all the props of his existence. His thoughts became concentrated; he forgot everything else, and in the agony of passion that brooked no restraint, he who had planned the whole of the decoy, and meditated so great a revenge, lost sight of all but the hardened ruffian whom he believed could not now escape him. Suddenly he sprang upon the rock, by which he had been concealed, and holding with both hands, high above his head, a ponderous stone, he cast it, loaded as it was with the most fearful curse that ever escaped the lips of man, down on Abel Richards. But the purpose was ineffectual; it wounded only the noble animal he rode, and which plunged violently forward. Immediately one of the gentlemen drew forth a pistol, and with deadly aim, fired at Byrne, who, still with foot advanced, his gray coat draping his colossal figure, stood overhead, cursing his missing hand. The bullet, true as an Indian's arrow, passed through his gray and streaming hair, and closed his mortal sufferings. He maintained his position, his arms outstretched, for a moment; then down he came, crashing and tumbling, among the projecting rocks, spattering with his life-blood those amongst whom he fell.

The circumstance was too much for hot-headed men to bear; it was in vain that Lawrence Macarthy, from his airy height, forgetting all prudential motives, sprang from his concealment, and by gestures they did not see, and words they could not hear, entreated the Whiteboys to forbear, if but for a moment. A yell issued from the mass—a yell that sent the eagles soaring into the heavens in terror and astonishment. Each man started from behind his rock, and the whole glen bristled with pikes and muskets. Thrusts were given—swords flashed and fell—and shots rattled like hail.

“Forward—forward—cut your way and forward; a gallop or a grave!” exclaimed the most collected of the officers. “Spur—spur—keep moving, and they cannot mark us!”

Forward they rode as men ride for their lives, and though they rode swiftly, they dealt destruction at every blow. The air was freighted with screams, and shouts, and execrations. Though the morning had advanced, its rays were impeded by the uplifted mountains, and lost in the mist. The fatal rock shuddered at its foundation—white doe will never more spring from its summit, nor eagle plume his feathers on its brow again! Then rang forth the signal—heard clearly above the mêlée beneath, and causing many a clear eye to turn upwards: three rapid notes on the bright bugle of the West!—The giant crag trembled—it tottered;—those

who pressed forward, were almost blinded by the smouldering dust that rushed down upon them. The last loyalist had passed beneath it—had turned the point—when down it came with the ravaging roar of thunder, bewildering, not destroying; a smoking ruin, closing up the pass effectually; too late to bar retreat, but just in time to preclude the Whiteboys from pursuit of those they had devoted to destruction.

The gentlemen rallied, and the troops, who had now learnt more wisdom than to follow the snare led on by Doyle, hearing the shots, galloped to the rescue. But dispirited at the failure of their great project, the Whiteboys were either dispersed or concealed effectually from pursuit, in an incredibly short space of time.

Long before Edward Spencer and his venerable friend drew near the pass, at the end of which the gentlemen had entered, they were made aware of the result. Women weeping and indulging in those manifestations of sorrow, which, however natural, lessen the grief they wail, were rushing forward in the same direction. The Dean paused, to make some inquiries at a cottage, well known in these, our days, for the refreshment and accommodation it affords to those who visit the “Blessed Island” of Gougane Barra; and there, dying like a dog on a heap of straw where he had sought refuge after being wounded, Mr. Spencer saw his good-natured warden of the unknown castle. The poor fellow recognised him; though but for a moment, he endeavoured to raise himself and to speak; the effort was unavailing; he fell back, and turning his face into the straw, groaned, and expired.

There were only women in the house; but one of them, a fearless, bright-eyed girl, with the intense expression, and the cast of features that one would attribute to a Joan of Arc, said, while she knelt by the body whose lips she had just moistened, “I never saw him before, in all my life—I don’t know the rights of it, gentlemen, but to judge by that,” and she looked towards the still warm remains of the man so full of strength and motive a few hours before, “there will be good reason in the country to remember the Pass of Keim-an-eigh.”

This scene was but the sad commencement of much that Edward had afterwards to encounter. The Dean wished to call at a gentleman’s dwelling, where they were delayed for some hours; and here they found the household in a state of painful confusion, with the exception of a venerable butler, and a few “of the boys about the place”—creatures whose early lives are spent in doing the fag-ends of everybody’s work, whose industry is so erratic as to be almost idleness, who never have time for any thing, and yet are invariably abused for doing nothing. All the men-servants that could be considered effective were absent, the women were shrieking and weeping, and the ladies obliged to attend upon them, as well as upon themselves. At length two returned, denying that they had been to the scene of action, but confessing that they had “heard the news”—news which they

trembled to tell: how at first the military moved away from the pass, and, as they returned through the country, set fire to every village, farm, and cabin they came near; and how that many more of the people were either killed or wounded than it was believed could have suffered during so brief a contest. These men were faithful servants, but had been compelled to the alternative of either banding with their neighbours, or of suffering accordingly.

As Mr. Spencer had determined on returning to Spencer Court that night—despite the hospitalities pressed upon him—he resolved to proceed without the Dean; he could think of nothing but Ellen; and, determined that she should no longer remain exposed to the changes and chances of her brother's fortunes, he rode on without a single fear for himself, although the apparent absence of existence, and the loneliness of the land, had something of a character more awful than that of tumult. More than once he heard in the distance the loud cry of lamentation of some bereaved wife or mother, and then all again was silent: it was, as his servant said, "a heavy-hearted evening." He had ridden about two miles, when, not far from the way-side—only half concealed by a clump of furze—he perceived a man crouching in evident anxiety to conceal himself. He drew up his horse, and before there was time to issue an order, his servant had dismounted and spoken with the stranger. He returned quickly.

"It's only a poor man, Sir, that does not feel very well in himself."

"But who is he?" said the Dean.

"A poor man of the place, Sir," continued the servant.

Edward dismounted.

"It's not worth your while, Sir, to take any trouble about him, his people will soon be here," continued the servant, anxious to prevent Edward from speaking to him. But Mr. Spencer persisted. He found the unfortunate creature resting, rather than lying, on his side, and his face turned away. Edward addressed him; the man faintly replied in Irish, to lead him to believe he did not understand him; but Edward instantly recognised the voice.

"Doyle!—Doyle!" he exclaimed. "My good-natured car-driver—my brave apologist at the midnight meeting—do you not know me?"

The poor fellow looked up.

"I thought it was all over with me when I heard the horses' tramp and the sound nearer and nearer, and I able to go no farther—not on account of the badness of the hurt, but the wakeness. Oh! then it's a poor case that a ball through the shoulder should take the strength out of a man's legs. I am safe with you, Sir, God bless you! Haven't I the 'grass greens,' and the dinner at Blarney, and the wish yer honour had about the cabins on the banks of the Lee, all before me this blessed minute. I'm safe with yer honour, but it's not that I'm thinking of—only

you're not safe with me—that's it! It's all up with us, Sir, and the gentry will sweep us out of the country after this, and it's better that I should die in a bog-hole, than you draw any question on yerself by mercy shown to me. So go on, Sir, dear; and don't bother yourself with me. It's no use now denying I *was in it*, and if this was the last word I had to speak, I'd be in it again. So that's all, and God bless you."

"I cannot—I will not leave you here, Doyle, to bleed to death," said Edward, for he saw that he was lying in blood which oozed from his shoulder. "I will not do it, nor do I want you to make any admission to me that would injure you hereafter. We must get you well first, and then talk about that."

"I shall never be well again, Sir; never rise a whip or lift off my hat to Lady Mary; I'm crushed all down this side, as well as shot, so God be with you, Sir, and lave me; the gentlemen wouldn't understand your having any pity for a traitor like me, they could not understand it, and it's insulted you'd be, as many have been before you, because of *a heart to the people*. You'll do nothing for me, I couldn't die asy if I thought a hard word was said of you through my means."

The poor fellow's generosity moved Edward far more than if he had entreated assistance.

"Is there no cabin near that can render you help? My servant shall ride on and procure a door, and we can carry you on that to some place of safety."

"There is a house of a cousin of my own behind the swell of that hill, but there's trouble in it already; the eldest son was killed by my side, and as there were two more in it, God knows whether they are dead or alive. It was there I was going, or it was there they were taking me and the poor dead boy, when the horse fell and could only move on with the one, so I made them take the ould man his child, and the young wife her husband, and thought I'd wait the mercy of God here; and sure he sent me yer honour."

Edward never for a moment thought of himself; but finding that Doyle believed he could endure the motion of a horse, determined to place him behind his servant and leave him with his friends. The car-driver resolutely opposed this; if it was known in the country, he said, that Mr. Spencer favoured *one of them*, it would do him "hurt and harm," and he should never live to be able to do his honour a "good turn" in this world. But Mr. Spencer's humanity and gratitude overpowered all other considerations. The horse was led slowly forward, for Doyle was thrown into the most acute agony by the least movement, and while the servant held him on, Edward walked by his side. The dying man spoke at intervals.

"I'd leave the world happy, Sir, if I thought you'd be a friend to the country."

"You may be sure I shall be a friend to the country, according to my own ideas of what will serve it, to the last."

"Well, Sir, God be good to you, you've a kind heart and a fine head of your own, only don't be hard on the poor people ; we're led to it and trained in it, Sir, and if we had enough work to keep us, we wouldn't be as mad as we are. God look down on my poor mother and sisters, and the little girl at Sundays-Well, that I'd have married next Saint Martins —and Sir, her ladyship *that you know*, tell her this, that her brother is safe, I know that."

"What brother ?"

"She has but two, the young gentleman that came over with your honour, and the one that you gave the letter to at Gougane."

A strong light broke in upon Edward's mind ; the fact now seemed self-evident, but he had never dreamed it so before ; he wondered at his previous stupidity ; wondered how he could have been so mistaken ; wondered that neither the Dean nor Lady Mary had explained ; he had never been a good finder out of riddles, but this one he now saw was so very simple ; what could even for a moment have so perplexed him ? *What* had rendered him jealous ?

"How do you know this ?" he said at length.

"Ah, sure, I knew it as well as your honour ; you needn't fear to trust me—*she* did not. I was a soldier for awhile myself with him, until I tired, and one way or another got clear of it ; many a time I saw him in the red coat, thinking how proud I'd be to see him in the green—oh, my grief ! Tell her honour, that every paper I'd any call to for him, I burnt on the spot where you found me ; bad as I was, the minute I was alone, I set fire to them with a coal out of my pipe, for fear they'd fall into strange hands ; though it's a rule among us, to bury all papers with the body they're found on."

The horse stumbled a little as he turned the sharp angle of a rock which brought the party in sight of the cottage to which Doyle had directed them, and the poor fellow fainted while Edward was inquiring about Lawrence and Ellen. Further on, a number of little children were weeping round a horse in the agonies of death, the animal had just been able to carry home the corpse of his young master ; and as they neared the house, they heard the "*keen*" mingling with the smoke which rushed through the open door. Despite his own deep and bitter sorrow, the bereaved father—a venerable-looking man of the humble farmer class—came out to receive them, and assisted to carry the still insensible car-driver into the dwelling.

Those who had brought home the dead body of his son concealed themselves at first, but upon hearing Mr. Spencer's name, they came forth, pouring blessings upon him for his goodness, and all praying that it might not do him "*hurt nor harm*."

With a degree of haste unseemly to English habits, they had already "*laid out*" the body, lit the candles, and raised the death-wail. The mother sat to the right of the table upon which the manly form of her beloved son had been placed ; her husband

called her attention to Doyle, and with extraordinary self-command she rose to render assistance to the friend and comrade of her child.

The interior seemed to Edward Spencer more like a scene of dreamy spells and incantations than aught else: the lights twinkling in the heated and murky atmosphere; the earnest and passionate faces, occasionally bending over the lifeless form of the young and handsome peasant, whose dark hair rendered the whiteness and calmness of his features still more conspicuous; the abrupt bursts of grief, and exclamations of sorrow or revenge, finding vent in both languages, and sounding from the more obscure portions of the dwelling; the fire, now blazing, now smouldering, at the far end of the apartment in a very cavern of blackness, which became illumined with the blaze for a moment, and then dark again. A table was very near the door, placed, it appeared to him, ready for a carouse, rather than fitted for a funeral, for upon it, sticks, and pipes, and mugs, and one or two green bottles, were laid—"any how."

Amid this din and darkness, a girl, fair, young, and delicate, and whose hair fell like a golden shroud around her, was kneeling by her dead brother's side; she had drawn one of his hands from beneath the cloth that covered his body, and pressing her cheek upon it, gaz'd upwards with glazed and tearless eyes, but with such an abandonment to sorrow, fixed—as for ever—on her face, that Edward could hardly believe she lived and breathed. They placed Doyle on a bed, in a demi-partition called "the room," and when consciousness returned, he seemed so anxious to speak to the old man, that Edward left them alone for a few minutes.

"It's what we're in dread of, Sir," said a girl, addressing Edward with gentle frankness, "it's what we're in dread of, Sir, is poor Mary; she went away this morning to seek him that's lying dead there—her heart's husband, that she loved more than her life—the Lord look down on her! and when she comes back—what will she see? Peggy Dacey!—tell us, dear, it will take some of the trouble off us, to cry it with you!"

The keener, whose long narrow face was half concealed by her hood, clapped her hands together twice or thrice, and recommenced:

"She'll see her young delight, her treasure of love, mowed down like summer hay; his heart is still, his breath will not move the curls from off his baby's brow, nor his voice sing the song that won her love under the beams of the May moon.

"His foot was fleet—his arm was firm—his spirit high and faithful; his lip kept silence—he was trusted, and never betrayed; in storm or sunshine, by land or sea, at his father's door, or among his people's graves; he was strong and steady—at Kilcrea, or the Holy Island—by the lakes of Inchageela, or in the Pass, where all was lost; the hawk of the hill was free and fearless."

The woman chanted in a low, and not unmusical voice.

"She could rise it stronger," observed one to the other, "only on account of poor Darby Doyle. Oh, then, isn't it shocking to see him, and not knowing if the priest will be in time to catch his breath—for he's a'most gone; and to see the gentleman himself, binding up his arm, and saying he'll pay for the finest doctor in Cork to save him?"

"Ah! then sure the English aren't all such savages," observed another, "he's as tender over him as a Christian. Whist! Peggy's raising the keen again; but her voice is more like the song of the thrush, than the cry of the aigle!"

"The glory of the morning was you, my jewel! Your eye kindled before day—your foot was first in the farm, and your whistle sweeter than the blackbird's. Early and late you were cheerful to do your mother's bidding;—the young kids licked your hands—and the plover never hid her nest from your sight."

"Say a good word for me, Peggy, when I'm gone; and good luck to you, woman dear!" exclaimed the poor car-driver from the inner room. "Say a good word for me, but don't drawl it out that way, like the sough of the north wind; let it come bright and fast, like an April sunbeam. What's to mourn, tell me that? Is it the pace and the prosperity we're leaving—is it the aise and contintment we get?"

"Whisht, Darby," interrupted the aged woman. "Whisht, jewel, there's death lying there, and my other boy's not home yet, and yerself, dear, on the long journey. Pray, dear; the soul that seeks Heaven should mount on the wings of prayer, and not on a thunder-boult."

"You've fine larning, Ma'am," replied Darby, smiling in her weeping face. "I often heard tell of thunder-boult coming down, but I don't know how they'd go back again. Yet that's no matter. *Mortuus est!* as Master Mat would say, we must all die! only somehow I'd like the sound of a Kerry bugle over me better than the whining of a woman—barring one. I'd rayther die as I'm dying than many other ways. I've no spite to the redcoats for this bullet; it was a fair fight—all fair enough;—and look now, I charge every one of you, on the word of a dying man, to see that no harm happens to this gentleman. Don't mind what you hear—he is the people's friend—I tell you that; and more,—I've seen something about him that makes me hope we'll get justice yet; not maybe so much from our own gentry as from such English as this, and there's more where he came from. It's not worth any of your whiles to look dark on a dying man. What I say's the truth!" He endeavoured to raise himself, but sunk back and called for water; then rallying, exclaimed, "Oh! wisha, Sir, don't turn against us. You've seen us in the storms that stirs up all that's bad;—may the Lord grant that you may live to see us in the sunshine! Whisht!—that's not the voice of the keener! Oh, murder!—it's the heart-shriek of his young wife, who knows now that he's gone from her for ever!"

And so it was. She had rushed into the dwelling while the

inmates were listening to Darby's words, and shriek followed shriek in every intonation of agony, as she clung to the form of all she loved. Tears that had found no way for his own sufferings, now coursed each other down the cheeks of Doyle.

"Get her away from him somehow," he said, after a few moments ; "get her away from him somehow ; and some of you have the sense to bring her her baby, *that* will give a new turn to her grief, if it does not ease her heart !"

There is an intense and ever active sympathy in every Irish bosom, and in that close and narrow space, Edward was struck with the earnestness with which each seemed to share the sorrow of his neighbour. The house was so remote, that numbers had flocked to it, all in some degree bereaved of those dear to their affections ; and many for shelter, in consequence of their cabins having been set fire to in the morning. The old farmer was known to be a favoured tenant of an influential landlord, and as such his house was a sort of city of refuge to his far neighbours. The old man, individually, deserved protection, for he had never interfered, although he had not the power to control his sons. Neither had he the sustaining comfort that belonged to others—in the belief that his son had fallen in a right cause. But the knowledge that the farmer was not absolutely one of themselves, did not prevent those who assembled from sharing his sorrow ; and Doyle was so universally beloved, that his danger was an overwhelming grief to all.

The car-driver was sinking rapidly, and he knew it, his great anxiety being that he might live to see the priest. He took an affecting farewell of many of his companions, addressing a few words to each in Irish. But the presence of Edward Spencer seemed his great consolation ; he was proud of having a gentleman by his bedside, and proud of showing him that he met death bravely. Now and then, the total unselfishness—the generosity of his fine nature—would break forth. He would entreat Edward for others, and manifest over and over again, his deep anxiety lest he should suffer in the estimation of "the country" for his kindness to the poor ear-boy. As his mind wandered, his words became unconnected, but they were still full of that warm, kindly, and generously exaggerated feeling which pervades the country, and renders the people so self-sacrificing as friends, so bitter as enemies, so valuable as allies, so perilous as adversaries.

"Boys, mind the time, you that live to see it, when Mr. Spencer's member for Cork. Mind the shouting then, and down with every man that doesn't shout louder than yourself ! Is that the priest ? I made a clean breast to father Duffy the morning of the last meeting at Gougane Barra ! He's a fine man, but easier to dale with before than after a ruction. Mr. Spencer—there's a blessed scapular on my breast, Sir—but it's not to be touched while I'm livin. When I'm dead, I'd like little Mary of Sundays—Well to have it for a keepsake. I'd send her a lock of my hair, but it's grown gray lately, and gray hair is an ugly keepsake from

a sweetheart to a girl under twenty. Miss Ellen ! oh, I don't know where she is, Sir. Oh ! then if she was Lady Mary, wouldn't the poor have great glory entirely with her and yer honour. But Lady Mary's a fine woman—and a born beauty—and a good ould stock—that's true ! ”

And then he continued mutterin ; the talking in the large room increasing, until “the keen” arose above it ; or a more loud and anguished scream than usual, caused the people to break into deep and earnest prayer for the support and consolation of the afflicted. Frequently, Edward observed, at the entrance of a new comer, there would be a pause, and then a universal tremulous cry, as some fresh loss was recounted. At first Doyle was anxious to learn the news, but his curiosity became momentarily less and less, and while Edward hoped some doctor might arrive, and endeavoured to reason himself into the belief that recovery was possible, Doyle faltered forth entreaties for “the priest,” and thoughts about his mothers and sisters, mingled with brief prayers for Edward, and a hope that every one might know how a gentleman stood by his death-bed.

At last a priest came, a man most unhappily mingled with rumours of disturbances ; one who had never poured oil upon the troubled waters, and who found it necessary, very soon after, to leave the country. His interview with Doyle was brief, and when the car-driver called again for Edward, he told him in an exulting tone that now he was “all ready for the road.” He took his hand and pressed it to his lips.

“ You'll be kind to the poor people, Sir ; you will—I'm sure you will—and so may God bless you ; and yer honour won't forget me ; and sure if I could clear your way to Heaven, I'd be proud to do it on my hands and knees : stand by the country, and the country will stand by you. Never forget how his honour brought me to a place of ease and safety ; where I've had time to make my soul, and not die in a ditch ; and not to say do it, but did it himself ; see him in safety as you value the blessing of a dying man. And I've no enmity to any ; the bullet was fair, though not easy.—God be with you, neighbours ; my head's more bothered than ever it was with a fight at a fair, let alone a fair fight ; and there's worse whizzing in my ears than ever I thought the Clooneys' shillelas could make when they cried ‘ Down with the Doyles ! ’ Oh ! will no one in mercy stop that keening ? it's worse on me than death itself ! ”

Of the people who heard his words, the one looked at the other, for the keener was silent ; having been, indeed, permitted to leave the house on her promise to return for the “first funeral.”

“ It's the poor fellow's last warning,” whispered one of the peasants to Edward ; “ the Doyles all have it.”

He had still hold of Edward's hand, and the last act of his kindly but misguided life was to press it to his lips. Mr. Spencer's feelings gave way when poor Doyle lay before him—“ a clod of the valley.” He had endeared himself to the master of Spencer

Court from the first, by his prompt gratitude in return for the sympathy Edward evinced for the people. He was nothing more than a fair sample of his class, his failings and perfections eminently national; yet the very nature of his perfections induced forgetfulness of his faults. Whatever reflections Edward might have made, were cut short by the "ullagone," attended by loud clapping of hands, and much crossings and prayer-sayings which followed the certainty of his departure.

Mr. Spencer placed money for his funeral in the hand of the old farmer, and as he made his way through the crowds that were now met together beneath the low roof, he was followed by abundant blessings.

"If yer honour should have any trouble about your goodness to the Whiteboys this blessed night," said a gigantic fellow who held his stirrup, "there isn't one of us who won't come forward at the risk of our own lives and swear you never saw Doyle, and never came near the place."

"And I'll get forty to *prove* your honour was in another county, or anywhere you please, Sir!" exclaimed a second.

"And anything we can do for you by night or day, shall be done, Sir; for though we're bet and broken, and scattered and murdered entirely over the country now, we'll not be so always," put in the first speaker.

"And, Sir, if any one vexes you, if I only hear it, they shan't do it a second time, that's all!" exclaimed a third, whom Edward could hardly distinguish in the gloaming.

"And we'll everyone be with you to your own avenue gate," said the second, "though you won't see us; it's not gates or boults that keep us out; and maybe, we won't watch over you—you, and all that have yer honour's good words or kind thoughts; oh, then, if all were like yer honour—it's not what we have among us this blessed night we'd have—God knows—"

"I'ts not want of manners hinders the poor ould man of the house, Sir, from running where I'm honoured by running now—at your horse's head—only, he's made wake by the trouble, there's no strength in his limbs, his fine boy gone; and 'deed, it's worse for another of them, for he's taken—taken with arms at the far end of the pass; we think his landlord will get him off; it's asy to get the grip of the law off, if you've any interest with the county, and the ould man's landlord is a great gentleman, and won't stand any meddling with his best tenants; only it's bothering, and the flower of the flock cut off in his prime."

Edward heard all, but said very little; he was fatigued in body and mind; he thanked them briefly, and offered money to more than one, thinking that like English retainers they waited for a gratuity; but it was always and instantly refused, and that in a manner which showed the offer gave them pain.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE EARLIEST CONSEQUENCES.

THE failure of the guerilla project was by far the greatest defeat sustained by the malcontents of the time ; yet the daring attempt had exhibited the determination and bitterness of the people, and proved that they would stop at nothing to achieve their purpose. This, of course, only served to exasperate the gentry still more against them ; they said, it was evidently not only the destruction of obnoxious individuals they desired, but that they panted to sweep away all who sought to restrain their violence. The escape had been miraculous ; for if the rock had fallen when and where the conspirators designed, it is certain that not one of the gentry would have survived to tell the tale. The insurgents would have had full range to slay and destroy ; the gentry would have been stabbed, shot, or crushed to pieces, before they could have received the least assistance from the military—even if the military had been made aware of their situation.

Byrne's hatred of Abel Richards destroyed not only himself, but his project ; he paid for his rashness with his life, and aroused the most fearful determination on the part of those who had escaped, as by a miracle, to "slay to the uttermost and spare not." Not a few of the gentry had believed that their previous conduct entitled them to exemption from the doom which had befallen the property, and menaced the life, of the hated middleman ; and felt secure in the country, in the very midst of conflagration and murder.

But this attack proved to them the determined spirit of extermination which characterised the conduct of the whole—a resolve to annihilate the memory of all kindness that might have been shown to them by any of the gentry—to destroy "by one fell swoop" all who came within their power. There was something in the plan and conduct of the affair, which aroused "the country;" it is to be feared there were but too many, who were glad to turn the sword against those who had exhibited so steady a resolve to wield it. It was a proof that every man's hand was against his neighbour ; the innocent were confounded with the guilty ; men and youths fled to the mountains ; and women and children, helpless and homeless, looked mutely into faces that were turned into iron against them and theirs. As to Abel Richards, he had never mounted a horse during the past ten years, but those who saw him wondered if he would return alive ! he was considered to have laboured for and earned the fate with which he was threatened. But the attack in the pass of Keim-an-eigh was quite another matter ; every gentleman felt as though a pistol had been levelled at his own head, or a dagger pointed at his heart : it was a universal cause. Edward Spencer was perhaps

he only one in the country who continued apparently inactive both in word and deed. During the fearful agitation which followed, he confined himself to Spencer Court for a few days, seeing only Dean Graves ; at last he attended a meeting ; and his altered appearance, his pale cheek, and anxious countenance attracted observation ; Irish indignation, and the rash, impetuous nature of Irish eloquence, with its mighty torrent of invective—of appeal—of destruction—of revenge, were poured forth ; he heard all—everything, yet maintained silence, and did not seem to sympathise with what he heard ; so reserved was he, that more than one hinted, and hinted loudly, that his loyalty was of a questionable nature.

Then, indeed, he spoke, and looked what he spoke in so decided a manner, that those who dared to doubt him, fire-eaters though they were, withdrew their insinuations ; not from fear, for they knew it not ; nor from a desire not to fight, for even then fighting was a pastime ; but from impulse—that indescribable something which moves Irishmen, and indeed all excitable men, at times, to generous apologies ; that stirs within their breasts and remodels their actions. Notwithstanding Edward's former calmness and coldness of manner, his refutation of the charge was so prompt and manly, so full of energy and feeling, that it at once commanded the attention, the respect, the entire and perfect belief—the *faith*, if not altogether the sympathy, of the meeting ; and so earnest were they to convince him of their entire change, that they deferred to him as if he were an old resident ; and when in the heat and fervour of protestation, some perhaps cooler and more calculating person—it might be even to try the mettle he was made of—proposed that a subscription should be immediately entered into, with the view to discover who originated or acted the prominent part in the late unparalleled events, Edward Spencer put down, not his name only, but the sum his name was pledged for, freely and frankly. The Goliah he had met at Macroom rolled his portly person over to him, and inquired, half in jest and half in earnest, “ If he took the gentlemen of the county for a pack of shopkeepers, and meant to insult them, by laying down ready money on a subscription list ? ”

At this meeting, also, inquiries were revived touching the papers which Miss Macdonnel, according to Abel's testimony, had in her keeping. Doubtless if possession of *them* could be obtained, the names of those who organised the people, and kept alive the spirit of insurrection, would be disclosed ; and instead of groping as they were in the dark, trusting to chance discoveries, and these always made by persons on whose testimony they could not depend, they would be certain of having the whole plan unravelled, and the necessary steps might then be taken with “ firmness.”

The Dean now repeated his belief that Ellen was kept out of the way by interested parties, because her nature was such, that if it cost a thousand lives she would speak the truth ; and, judging truly from his knowledge of her character, he also

asserted his conviction that she yielded to the concealment rather than bring trouble upon those she loved ; nor did it escape the Dean's observation that while he thus spoke, Mr. Spencer's eyes as well as ears devoured his words, and that when he had concluded, Edward grasped his hand and murmured, " God bless you, you read her rightly "

" And why should I not ? " was the reply. " Have I not known her all her life, and was there ever anything about her that ought to remain unknown ? "

" I thought, " said Mr. O'Driscoll, " that Mr. Spencer had never seen his cousin."

" It does not follow that I cannot appreciate her character, Sir, " responded Edward, with more haste than judgment.

" Most certainly not ; I have known instances where actual knowledge has destroyed ideal appreciation."

" Do you mean to apply that observation to my cousin, Miss Ellen Macdonnel, Sir ? " inquired Edward.

" Now ! " shouted the burly Irishman, in a tone of triumph, mingled with his rich, ripe, soft, woolly brogue, and the exulting clap of his hands sounded like the report of a blunderbuss : " Now hear to that, boys ! an Englishman, so calm and quiet and reserved about all law-making and breaking, which is quite *un-English* you'll allow ; and yet when a young lady is named whom he has never seen, and, according to the present prospect of state affairs, never may see, he bristles up like an Irishman, fires his double barrel, and then waits, as proud as the eagle of Glena, to see who dare fire at him ; it's a pity not to give him diversion in that way, and my time is not over for that same yet ; but my heart warms to the kind young feeling as though sixty winters had not snowed upon my head, God bless him for it ! What are you all grinning at ? " he exclaimed, turning round to a group of young men who were nudging each other, and laughing at the old man's well-known weakness, which, set as it was in so burly a frame, was certain to excite their mirth whenever he touched upon it : " What are you grinning at, you young shavers ? your hearts (if you have 'em) haven't stirred you yet, or you'd know better ; a man knows nothing until he's been touched in the heart—a pistol shot is nothing to it. Do ye think *I* don't know ? So close your lips, and learn manners."

This little scene over, the gentlemen returned with unusual steadiness to the object of their meeting. It was determined that, to the rewards already offered both by the government and the gentry for the detection of the originators of the destruction at the house of Abel Richards, a very large sum should be added to secure the ringleaders of the late conspiracy ; martial law was already proclaimed throughout the county ; and some proposed a reward for the discovery of where Miss Macdonnel was concealed ; this was negatived at once, though it was determined that every means should be used for the purpose of finding her. Several of the magistrates entered upon their plans for the detection of the

offenders ; while others, whose age and experience would have led persons unacquainted with Irish habits to expect counsel of deliberation rather than haste, and a mingling of mercy with justice—recommended what might seem a course of extermination, and laughed at the idea of any sum of money, any temptation inducing a betrayal.

“ The creatures will die by dozens in a ditch,” said Mr. O’Driscoll, “ when a few words, uttered secretly, would secure them and theirs, the possession of every earthly comfort during the remainder of their lives ; but they won’t—not they ; and the women are worse than the men. We had a rascal once in Cork gaol, a rare scoundrel—thought no more of taking the life of a man than I should the life of a fly, would toss up for a shot at his neighbour as coolly as he would for a noggin of whiskey, and swear an alibi for half-a-crown. Well, when he was fairly housed at last, we worked on him in such a way that he was on the point of turning king’s evidence, and a fine point it was, for he was under sentence of death.”

“ And how could you get him off, if sentence had been pronounced ? ” inquired Edward.

“ Easy—easy ; forty ways,” was the reply. “ And he was a terrible coward—we frightened him with a ghost. Well, we had him ripe and ready ; but, as ill luck would have it, we let his wife and his two children in to see him. We thought, in the course of nature, that she would help us—a poor half-starved creature, looking like a hare just hunted over hill, and through water, by a pack of harriers. And what do ye think she did ? He told her how his life was to be spared, and how he was to have money, and be lifted, with her and the children, quite out of the country. And she was overjoyed at first, and twisted her thin arms about him, and prayed God for the good of the ‘ merciful gentlemen ; ’ and the rascal laughed one of his bitter Papist laughs at that, and then told her he was under no compliment to them for it, for he earned it. And when she asked how, and understood it at last, she knelt down, and made her children kneel and threaten to curse him on the spot if he turned informer. She did so ! I give you my honour,” continued Mr. O’Driscoll ! “ and she stirred him up so effectually, that he died dumb—dumb as a red herring ! ”

“ That indeed was Roman heroism,” observed Edward, who at the moment considered only the deep devotion of the woman to what she believed right.

“ She was an obstinate fool ; and her children beg the streets of Cork for her to this day, for she lost her senses. But there are hundreds like her ; and we shall never get rid of the ringleaders, if we wait till informations are lodged. Money has no more power over them than rain over a river trout.”

“ What a pity,” said Edward, whose mind was imbrued with the lofty romance of this devotion, and who, under the influence of feeling, lost sight of its great danger : “ what a pity that *we* have never been able to move this power to work to *our* purposes. Surely,

if we had taken half the pains to enlist their sympathies, that we have taken to strengthen their prejudices, we should have created a happy, where we have now a miserable, people!"

"Sympathies!" repeated Mr. O'Driscoll, after giving a long whistle. "Well, that *does* beat! The sympathies of a parcel of ignorant savages, whose great sympathy was to murder us all in that infernal Pass! I give you my honour, I have heard forty plans for civilising the Irish, but I never heard of cultivating their *sympathies* before!"

"You must suffer the angry feeling to subside before you say a word in their favour; your oil only increases the flame; let it subside," whispered the Dean to Edward Spencer; yet it is doubtful if the judicious hint would have had any effect, but that the evening was approaching; many had far to ride, and no one cared to be out in the twilight; the preparations for the road were quite of a military nature, most of the gentlemen carried a brace of pistols, and some were additionally armed. When their servants were Protestants, they were armed also; and all were well, some of them magnificently, mounted. Horses of the highest blood, and of course most exquisite symmetry, managed without an effort by their riders, whose every movement they obeyed. Unlike the meeting at Macroom, where the destruction of Abel Richards' homestead was a circumstance they noticed, because it was their duty to do so; and where, despite other disturbances, they mourned the time that kept them from their amusements, and but for the well-known character of the Master of Macroom, would have turned every part of the proceedings into ridicule,—now all were determined, and united in their determination, to leave nothing undone to "tranquillise"—according to their reading—the country; though to Edward it seemed a resolve to conquer it with fire and sword.

The party set off in a body; they had lunched, not dined, and were perfect masters of themselves. Mr. O'Driscoll, who, of late, could hardly find a horse in the kingdom capable of sustaining his weight, bestrode a huge creature, inclined every now and then to be frisky; an animal that seemed to have expanded from a hunter into an English cart-horse, still retaining its beautiful proportions, and large as it was, *corveting* at times with inimitable ease and even grace, while its master made several efforts to stimulate the mirth of the party by loud and hearty jests. But though he succeeded for a few minutes, there was a reaction, and their momentary mirth diminished into a silence, seldom broken—save as they bade each other adieu, when their roads lay different ways; and before a gentleman, who had to pursue his road followed by only a servant, departed on his appointed path, while tarrying in his adieus, he examined carefully the state of his pistols, placed them "handy" in the bosom of his coat, and then, as if half ashamed of his precaution, set off at a careless canter, waving his hand, and whistling, while his servant followed closely behind. At last it came to Edward's turn to

diverge to the right, just where, had it been standing, the dwelling of Abel Richards would have come in sight.

"I beg your pardon, Sir, but was he in it at all to-day?" inquired the servant, after riding up to his master's side; "I mean, did he go to the meeting of gentlemen that your honour has just left?"

"Who?" inquired Mr. Spencer, whose thoughts were not directed towards Mr. Richards.

"Him that lived over there once?"

"Oh, you mean Mr. Richards; no, I did not see him."

"Ah, I thought not, when I heard he had been colloquing these two days past with Peter the Peeler; and then the two made away with themselves, and others beside, out of the place; there will be something afoot soon, that we'll all hear of, for certain."

The servant fell back.

"Who did you say Mr. Richards had been much seen with?"

"Peter, Sir, the Peeler, you saw him yourself, if you remember, at Macroom; he was a gay fellow *once*, with bright eyes, not ashamed to meet the daylight, but he's gone altogether to the bad—into an old shrivelled up man; and how can he help it, travelling the country, with the curses of the poor weighing him into his grave!"

"James," observed his master, "during the short time you have been in my service, you have conducted yourself well, and I think you may understand that no country can be either peaceable or prosperous while the people are unwilling, no matter what the crime may be, that the criminals shall be punished for it."

"Oh, Sir, no doubt; if people do wrong, they ought to suffer for it."

"So far we are agreed, James."

"Yes, Sir; I'd be ashamed to differ from your honour."

"Well then, how is it that such dreadful disgrace attaches to those who give up a delinquent to the laws?"

"Sir?"

"How is it that you are so outrageous against Peter, for instance, simply because he has given information?"

"Sure, Sir, he has told lies—never a word of truth in him, nor ever was; he's made up of falsehood—the base informer!"

"His being what you consider an informer is, you think, his great crime, James. And even you, if you saw a murder committed, I doubt if you would proclaim the murderer."

"The Lord forbid, Sir!" was the servant's quiet reply.

"And why?"

"Is it to have myself and all belonging to me held up to the country; to have my name, poor as it is, set as a mark for the next hundred years? Sure, flesh and blood could not stand it, your honour."

"But can you not see how unsafe every creature's life must be if murders are to bring no punishment?"

“True for you, Sir.”

“You might be shot yourself.”

A slight smile passed over James’s features as he again said, “True for you, Sir.”

“And no one mark the murderer.”

“Never a one, your honour! and sure, Sir, it’s small good it would do me, if they did.”

“But justice—the law—I tell you,” repeated Edward, forgetting as an Englishman the idea attached by the Irish to those words. “Justice demands a sacrifice, and there is holy authority for it, which says, ‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’”

“Is there, Sir? Why then I wonder how the counsellors and attorneys, the judges and informers like to hear tell of that!”

Edward felt irritated; the coolness and self-possession of his servant baffled him with his own weapons; he was about entering upon the question, determined to prove to James the danger and sinfulness of the horrid system, and had tightened his bridle for the purpose, when his attention was arrested by the unexpected appearance of the treasure-seeker.

“Don’t be frightened at me, Sir,” he said in his gentle voice. “Don’t—I’m little more than an innocent now, that the children say ‘God help you’ to, as they pass. I know by their pitiful eyes, how it is with me. I have been all day long waiting for you at Spencer Court, with this scrap; and Mrs. Myler is so cross. Wouldn’t give me the key of my own school, Sir, because she said your honour had not ordered it. So I sat at the door, and looked in at the window, until I could see at their lessons all those the famine and the fever took. All of them! my little darlings—and my Grecians; and my Demosthenes—Joe Mulchahy, that I called my Demosthenes—was standing, as he used, the little rogue, in my place, and I waited for his voice; but when he opened his mouth, there crept out—ough! they were all spectral ghosts and goblins gray, knocking with their fleshless feet upon the floor, while their bones rattled, and the books faded into a thin smoke, and my pretty blackbird—my dead bird—quivered his yellow bill, and sang. Oh my! oh my!—but the world is changed—when there was no one for the love of poor Mat, to take care of his old blackbird!”

Seeing that Mr. Spencer took no notice of the treasure-seeker, but was intent upon the paper he had given him—while he endeavoured to decipher (by the moonlight) its contents, James slipped in, in true Irish fashion, sundry inquiries, and a hint as to who the letter was from. But simple as Matthew was in all other matters, he was too faithful-hearted to betray trust; in fact his intellect was as perfectly alive, when he saw an attempt made to wrest a secret from him, as ever; and he parried the question so as to leave James quite in the dark, who then began talking to him about ancient places—hidden treasure, and mysterious dreams—while Mr. Spencer, having placed the letter in his bosom

suffered the horse for some time to walk on at his own pace, until, moved by a sudden impulse, he put spurs to it. But before James followed, Matthew implored him to take him up, for he must not lose sight of the master; and, accordingly, he mounted, pillion fashion, firmly grasping James's leather belt; and Mr. Spencer never was aware of this unservant-like proceeding, for before their arrival, he had thrown himself from his panting horse, and, entering the drawing-room at Spencer Court, rang loudly for his lamp.

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### CHAPTER XXX.

#### IN CONCEALMENT.

IT was a lovely autumnal evening; soft balmy breezes were wafted over the ocean, which reflected in its transparent bosom every vapour that floated between earth and heaven; the water was very, very calm; and it rolled so noiselessly upon the sands of a small bay, near the village of Skull, called Shell Bay, as not to ripple even on the beach, welling around and over the weedy rocks, that seemed to sink under its pressure; close to the shore, the bright blue tone deepened into ultramarine, while the rocks that were covered with the light brown sea-weed, shone like gold beneath the transparent surface. The murmur occasioned by the swell of the ocean, as it gained upon the beach, partook more of the character of a low, sighing, whispering music—soft and monotonous in its half audible chaunt—than the usual “voice” of living waters; there was a very silence in the sound; occasionally, a faint rush might be distinguished, as some more boisterous wave swelled on before its companions, and drew back, into the deep, fold after fold of the silver sand; then, on its return, giving tributes to the land—fragments of coral, bits of sea-wreck, a broad sea riband that might girdle a mermaiden’s waist, or a glittering star fish, worthy to sparkle on her brow; or it might be nothing but a few broken shells, or an astonished little crab, cast by the ’whelming water from amid the tasseled and silvery sea-flowers of the nearest rock.

The bay is very narrow, delving in between two projecting reefs, that jut out abruptly from the main land, rising like fortifications on either side—near the base, dark, bare, and perpendicular; then plotted in the various fissures with that soft green downy grass, amid which sea-pinks and the slender London Pride are known to vegetate; higher up, arose a sort of cone of angular rocks, where scores of sea-fowl built, and reared their young in safety; this appearance was to the right of Shell Bay, while to the left, the rocks were less marked in their character, and shelved back to the land, leaving, however, a deep and dangerous fissure; while that portion of the promontory when viewed from the country, stood alone like a rocky sentinel, bearing an imaginary

likeness to a headless giant. It was impossible for persons on the beach to get into this lovely bay at high water, for the rocks projected so far, that when the tide was nearly in, the sea washed over it ; to descend or ascend the cliffs would have been a service of danger to the most experienced cragsman, and in times of storm, the sea-wreck accumulated into heaps increased the natural difficulties that debarred entrance. It is impossible to conceive any strand of finer texture or greater beauty, but as it shelved upwards it grew rough and uneven,—the stones enlarging, as it were, into fragments of rock as they became piled one upon another—it would have perplexed the most practised eye to discover an indentation sufficient to shelter a living creature : even on that particular evening, when the sun, sinking in the broad Atlantic, threw the glory of his brightness in floods of radiant and varied light into the bay, illuminating every fragment, and penetrating each fissure, until the very sea-birds winked, and floated away on their pointed and glancing wings.

Close, however, to the shore, was an aperture, into which a man could creep—and even this was screened from observation, by a rock springing up in front, within a couple of feet of the opening. The interior of this cave was tapestried with sea-damp—for the tide rolled into it at high water, and roared and racketted impatient of its narrow bounds ; it might have been resorted to in old times, when what is now the ruinous village of Skull was a prosperous town, by those who pursued the smuggler's trade ; then, most likely, the entrance was more capacious, for the sea always leaves stony tokens of its visits, which, in time, forbid its own entrance into places where once it revelled.

Those who visited it, at the period of our story, were obliged to creep through a long, narrow passage, perfectly dark in its windings ; and as the green sea-weed covered the huge stones, it became dangerous to penetrate, for deep pools of water remained in the hollows after the retreat of the tide. This mysterious entrance terminated in a sort of platform, the only further outlet from which was a very steep ascent through the cliff of some yards—still in darkness—leading to an excavated chamber—spacious, and sufficiently airy, for a long division in the rock permitted the entrance of both light and air—at the very least forty feet above high water mark. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the sea view to be obtained from this natural window ; the broad Atlantic rolled its waters far as the eye could reach, and when the day was fine, there was a superb view, not only of Long Island, but of the Rocky Calves, and Cape Clear. The chamber branched off into another and smaller one, and in this, a window had been hewn out of the solid rock, which could be closed by means of an inner shutter ; this, if possible, commanded a wider sea range, than the one we have mentioned ; and the light from Cape Clear beacon was seen more distinctly—probably from its being about four feet higher than the other. From this closet-like apartment, there ascended a passage cut through the clay, and when a rock,

too large to be removed, intervened, the excavators wound their way round it, thus leaving innumerable buttresses and projections; and in some places its construction was not unlike the geometrical stairs constantly met with in the old castles once so abundantly scattered throughout the country.

To have completed this subterraneous path to the distant part of the cliff where it terminated as cautiously as it commenced, between the shelving rocks formed by the *débris* of Mount Gabriel, and overgrown by gorze and furze, must have been a laborious and tedious work. And the passage, once of considerable breadth, had become impeded by in-falls of clay and rubbish of various kinds.

The "Shell caves," as they were called by those who either knew of their existence, or had heard them mentioned as refuges to those who sought shelter there after the troubles of former times, were regarded with more than the usual terror which the peasantry feel towards underground retreats, from the rumour that after the upper entrance had been closed for such a number of years, some boys had discovered it, and upon arriving at the smaller room, found it contained a skeleton!—The fragments of dress denoted that the wearer was a female, and was of no common order; for there were amid the mouldering rubbish, shreds of silk, and the shoes were embroidered and high-heeled, and a ring was found upon the fleshless bones, glittering in bitter mockery of the mortality it survived.

They said, that in old times a sea king was in the habit of visiting this particular portion of the coast, and it was believed that love for the daughter of one of the inland chiefs had tamed his fierce nature into a gentleness, which sea kings were generally considered incapable of feeling; and yet the voice of the sea king, when he wooed her in his gentlest mood, was as the voice of storms; and he carried a cannon and a spear, many feet in length, in his girdle, instead of dirk and pistol, and his sigh set all the banners in her father's hall waving; and he told her that she was not worthy to be his love, because she did not value him as he deserved, but that, nevertheless, he had resolved to bestow himself upon her, and that he would endeavour to make her what he desired. He strove to convince her how proud and honoured she ought to feel at the notice he bestowed upon her; he told her of the battles he had won; of the numbers of men he had killed with his own hand; of the tortures he inflicted upon those who thwarted his desires; of the hundreds he held in captivity in caves beneath the roaring ocean; of the mere shadow of his black flag, making the nations of the earth to tremble; of the richness and strength of his ships; of his sea-beds of pearl and forests of coral; of his love for her having already caused him to behead two wives; in short, the wooing of the sea king was very different from all other wooings that ever were heard of in the green and learned island—a wooing better suited for an egress, than the gentle, timid lady, Kathleen O'More, of the Primrose Valley.

The sea king's retinue and retainers were as singular as himself ; he bestrode a great mountain of a horse, with a scaly tail ; the animal snorted its disdain of all other horses in flakes of fire, which blazed from his nostrils, and then galloped away to the lake in front of the castle, sporting and neighing, and at last diving beneath its waters ; remaining there until a huge shell, which served the king as a bugle, summoned him to his duty—when he shook torrents from his mane, as though they were drops of water.

Now the old chief loved pleasure and wealth, and exceedingly delighted in the fine presents bestowed by the sea king upon his daughter. There was no end to the music, the singing, and the feasting in the castle when he came ; the tables groaned beneath haunches of red-deer venison and boars' heads ; claret was more abundant than water, and as for whiskey ! the moat was drained to be filled again by mountain dew. The neighbouring chiefs declared it was impossible the chief of the Primrose Valley could stand it much longer, yet he seemed to grow rich and thrive on his extravagance ; but then the neighbouring chiefs were not let into the secret ; they saw nothing of the strings of pearls larger than turkey eggs, or the trees of coral, or the horse-loads of diamonds, that were brought by the sea king as presents to his love. But however these gifts might affect her father, it was certain the young lady felt no tenderness for the Vikinger, or whatever he was called. Woman's love is not always to be bought by pearls or corals, or even real diamonds. There are in every age a sufficient number of high-minded and disinterested maidens—fair, and lovely—who keep the jewel of their rich affection for the chosen of their hearts, rather than the selected of their interests ; there are, be it known, a sufficient number of such, to rescue the sex from the charge so often brought against them by their “lords and masters,” of being much given to gauds and finery, and prone to bestow their hands to hands of gold rather than hearts of love—their heraldry reading, “hands and lands, not hands and hearts.” But Kathleen O'More was none of these ; she loved the son of a neighbouring chief, and whenever her father commanded her to receive her kingly wooer, she hung her head and wept—wept silently ; and then met her true lover in the Primrose Glen, as she always said “for the last time ;” but these “last” meetings generally concluded in those days as they do in our own, with an arrangement for another “last” meeting ; and so they continued from day to day, or rather from evening to evening, until some busy person told her father, and her father fearing the sea king's vengeance would be visited on him if he discovered his daughter's dislike to his addresses, threatened to put her instantly to death unless she promised to give up her lover and marry the sea king without further delay.

This she almost refused to do ; kneeling to her father with many tears, and entreating that he would not force her to such a sacrifice—offering to do any thing but *that*, to prove her duty and

affection. The chief then resolved on trying to effect his purpose by an appeal to her loving duty ; he told her how the extravagance of his display had provoked the jealousy of his neighbours, who could forgive any thing rather than the prosperity in which he rejoiced ; and how they had entered into a conspiracy to deprive him of his castle and lands and to cut off his head, and cast forth his retainers ; all of which they would be able to accomplish if the sea king did not sustain him by his protection, which of course he would not do, if Kathleen persisted in refusing him her hand.

The poor maiden looked on the white hairs of her father and into the tearful eyes of her mother, and resolved to live out the few months of suffering that would be given unto her for their sakes, and in their service.

The sea king came in his splendour, the sound of revelry and rejoicing was echoed from mountain to mountain, and Kathleen's mother comforted herself with the belief that because her daughter had achieved a rich husband she must be a happy wife.

She had met her young lover—truly for the last time, for the purest diamond in her heavy crown was not more pure than her honour.

Now there are caverns in the hearts of all men, wherein are concealed either the most precious affections which nourished in secret into their full strength, coming forth in right time and in ripe season, to comfort and hallow all around them ; or in which are certain bitternesses, evil intentions, foul thoughts, and deep-laid schemes for revenge and destruction : it is wonderful how so much wickedness can be distributed from so small a machine : and though the heart of the sea king may have been larger than the hearts of other men, still the amount of evil he compassed, and the destruction he accomplished in the mere wantonness of power, is spoken of to this day—so as to render it doubtful whether he was not in reality the spirit of evil permitted to assume the bearing and semblance of a strong man, and visit the island as a scourge and a pestilence !

The morning after his bridal he summoned his horse from its retreat, and mounting his trembling bride thereon, said he would show her some pastime from the summit of Mount Gabriel. He threw his great arm as a girdle around her as she sat before him, and the scaly steed ascended the mountain as though he had been an eagle rather than a horse ; when at the top the sea king told her to look down on the Primrose Valley ; and he asked her what she saw. And truly she trembled much, for she saw, as it were, herself pressed in a really last adieu to her lover's heart, and she turned her eyes on the sea and made no answer ; and again he told her to look, and behold the valley was filled with a *mélée* of the serfs of other chiefs mingled with the barbarians who called the sea king master, and they strove three to one with the servants of her house, and her lover had fallen pierced with bitter wounds ; and her father and her mother were on their knees to

armed men ; and Kathleen could look no longer on the scene, but entreated her husband that he would spare her parents ; he laughed at her agony, and the caverns of Mount Gabriel echoed the laughter as though it had been thunder ; and he commanded her to look again, and behold of the old chief's castle there remained but a smoking ruin, and the valley was strewn with heaps of dead, and the river that ran through it was of red blood, and the barbarians caroused with the retainers of the neighbouring chiefs, and there was loud and unholy revelry.

“ Now,” said the sea king, “ rest your eyes on the blue of the waters, and repose them on the soft white foam of the sea—sweeter and softer it is than beds of roses—a heaving, restless, immortality—swelling and sounding, talking in its free and fearless voice to the heavens—fresh and powerful—free of all the impurities of the festering earth ; a bold, brave, and glorious element. Lady, such is the sea king's kingdom ! ”

But Kathleen looked again, and, behold, there were none in the valley but the retainers of the sea king—those of the chieftains' people, who had fought and conquered with them, had been driven by them away from the valley which they hoped to call their own ; and the barbarians consulted together and settled how they were to set chief against chief, and clan against clan, until the whole island became theirs ! And this they knew they could not accomplish unless they worked upon the jealous and fractious spirit of the proud and kindly but impetuous islanders. And the sea king shouted, “ It shall be ; ” and Kathleen exclaimed, “ Oh, my poor country ! ”

And the sea king shook her from his horse, and said, “ Your heart is earthly ; I have shown you great sport, and noble pastime—yet you shiver and turn pale—you are no wife for me ; ” and descending, he traced with his finger the opening leading from the high cliff into the Shell Cave ; and into it Kathleen was carried by his command, and left alone to pine out her existence. So runs the legend of Shell Bay and its caves.

The caves were now occupied by Lawrence and the friend who had been so earnest to organise a revolution throughout the west. He was, in a word, a good soldier, but a bad conspirator, and had ruined himself and others. The two young men had evidently endured intense anxiety and privation. Since the failure of their last effort, they had crept stealthily through the country, knowing a price was set upon their lives, and that, so closely were they hunted, the only chance now left of preserving their existence was to quit Ireland as speedily as possible. They had wandered for several nights on the bleak mountain that towers above the shore, depending for subsistence upon the cold potatoes and “ noggins of milk ” which the peasantry risked their lives to convey to them, at the very time when a reward was offered for their apprehension, that would have more than realised the dreams of wealth which in cruel mockery sometimes visit the pillowless heads of misery. But with them they were safe ; the most

ragged child would have died, sooner than betray them ; and they arrived at their present retreat through the skilful management of Biddy Doyle, who disguised Lawrence as a hawker of herrings, and Louis as a beggar woman afflicted with the small-pox, and thus passed them through a fair in the neighbourhood, when the few tents that were pitched were examined by soldiers during both the day and the night. Once secreted in the Shell Cave, their worn-out hopes revived, and the love of life returned, with the prospect of its being spared—bitter though its continuance must be—at least, for a time.

They had concealed themselves in the caves for more than a week, visited at intervals by Murtogh, who brought them food and such information as he could obtain as to the degree of vigilance exercised towards their discovery ; and every now and then a fearful account of some act of retributive justice, which they considered unprovoked. Their necessary confinement would have been more tolerable if any ideal or even imagined sympathy had continued to bind the young men to each other ; neither would then have shrunk from adversity or want, or misery, or distress of any kind ; but mistrust had mildewed regard, and they had learnt how little was really common to them both.

Murtogh was stretched upon a couple of sacks in the larger “apartment,” his chin resting on his hands, his huge head elevated, and his heavy eyes fixed upon the sky ; and thus he had remained for hours. Within, Louis was leaning against the rocky embrasure of the window, gazing down upon the sea, while Lawrence, ever restless, paced backwards and forwards, sometimes pausing to give vent to his impatience.

“Three days have come and gone, Louis, and yet the boat which Lady Mary promised, comes not. I have often heard that running water and lady’s words are about as much to be trusted.”

“Lady Mary O’Brien’s word was never doubted,” was the reply ; “and dreadful as this state of existence is, it cannot, I know, be avoided. It is not only the boat, but the vessel, that must wait upon us. And delay upon delay may arise, which *here* we cannot understand, and which must be still unavoidable.”

“Ah ! you gentry know how to plead for each other,” sneered Lawrence.

“My sister needs no pleader,” replied Louis, “though God knows I, of all brothers who ever lived, ought, if it were needed, to plead for her, who has pleaded for me, at all times, and in this last instance, almost to the peril of her life, and now has embarrassed herself almost past redemption, to save me.”

“To save *us*, you would say,” observed Lawrence, in his usually untamed tone. “To save *us*.”

“I meant what I said,” replied Louis. “Her noble mind embraces my friends in her remembrances of me, and you know that in the very letter which Mr. Spencer brought me that night at Gougane Barra, she offered the same means of withdrawal to my friend, that she did to myself. Lawrence for two such un-

worthy rascals to have two such sisters, is a strange apportioning of woman's love, is it not?"

"*Your* sister did not interpret so favourably of mine," replied Lawrence.

"She did not know her," said Louis; "she only saw in her the spirit that drew me on to a course of which she disapproved, and who then," he added, while he covered his face with his hands, "then forsook what she destroyed."

Lawrence turned abruptly away; he was moved by some strong emotion, and in a trembling voice exclaimed, "Louis!" His companion looked up. Again Lawrence turned away as suddenly as before.

"You spoke?" observed his companion.

"Oh! nothing—a thought only—nothing more. I imagined you must have known Mr. Spencer."

"No—I never saw him until that night. I was abroad with my regiment when first he knew my sister. And after her marriage, my sudden disappearance led to so many surmises, that, even if I live in the affections of her and my father, I am not mentioned to them by our acquaintances: I take it for granted, however, that he knew who I was."

The meaning of these words did not reach the ear of Lawrence, who seemed perfectly unconscious that his companion spoke, and continued moving restlessly about, now watching the wide-spread waters, now examining the priming of his rifle.

"We have never had fair play abroad or at home," said Lawrence, abruptly changing the conversation, as Louis observed he always did, from a domestic to a general nature: "never! I know you will repeat the same reason over and over again, that we are not publicly respected; that what you and others call our 'assassinations,' operate against us—is it not so?"

"You know it is, Lawrence. But these opinions have so frequently caused uncomfortable feelings between us, that they are better avoided."

"Then what are we to talk about?" inquired Lawrence, pettishly. "There are so many forbidden subjects, that I hourly feel more bitterly my dependence upon you for the means of escape from my own land—my own land, beloved as it is! which, but for your *charity* (I may call it so, hard though the word is), would be either my prison or my grave."

"This is unworthy of you, and of our cause," answered Louis, who fluctuated as much as Lawrence, and whose dreams of well-arranged revolt frequently returned in the absence of the disorderly multitude who were now dispersed and starving amid the mountain fastnesses of the country: "this is quite unworthy of you. After a time we shall meet on the same ground, and with a better organised party. For myself I care not; but I do care for those who have failed with us—who trusted so implicitly to our guidance—who believed what we believed all too hastily, of foreign help and foreign funds;—who saw with our eyes, heard with our ears,

and have suffered for our ambition or our heedlessness. We have added to their miseries ; we have augmented their evils ; we have rendered wives widows, and children fatherless. Our finest fellows are gone : that poor Doyle—so attached to my family ! I cannot tell you what I suffer, Lawrence—death would be a perfect heaven to my tortures. Fool that I was ! consoling myself with the idea that because I perilled myself I had a right to peril others. I have brought death to their homesteads, and loneliness to their hearts ; frightfully increasing their miseries—miseries from which they have no refuge ! ”

“ As good refuge as I have,” replied Lawrence.

“ If you so argue,” observed Louis, “ you may say, as good refuge as we have.”

“ No, you have rich friends.”

“ No, poor in all but feeling. We are only rich or poor by comparison. Of the two, you are richest.”

Lawrence laughed, bitterly, scornfully ; and then “ rushing ” at another subject, which had no apparent connexion with that they had previously conversed about, he said,

“ If I knew what had really become of those papers, I should be satisfied.”

“ I have no concern about them,” replied Louis. “ Your sister’s word is guarantee for any thing. Would to God I could be as satisfied of her safety, as of theirs.”

“ When I am gone she will be safe enough,” said Lawrence, carelessly. “ If she had cared much for me she might have obtained some means—not left me penniless ; Mr. Spencer would not have refused her, if—”

“ Heaven and earth ! ” interrupted Louis, flushing over brow and cheek. “ Heaven and earth ! would you have subjected her to ask a favour, and from those whom you despise ? You could not mean it.”

There was a long silence, and at last Lawrence spoke.

“ Louis, Louis ! ” he said, in a sorrowful tone, “ God forgive me, I doubt at times but that I, the Macarthy, might become something like the creatures I could have spurned ; at times I am so unlike, at others so like, my former self ; there is a clinging of my heart to the old island, mingled with other thoughts, especially at night—in half dreams—a sort of feeling that weighs heavily upon my soul and shakes my resolve, my faith in all things : there are moments when I doubt the thing I look upon, the very faith I would at any time die to preserve ; I sometimes think I have the spirit of two persons, centered here ; I feel not only at war with the world, but with myself, for being like what my better nature loathes, and would pray, if I could, to be like what as a boy I was—an unstained patriot, full of the hope I had resolved to make reality—unfixed, unstable now, like a new vessel, wrecked in its strength—a strength it had not the knowledge to apply. What a curse it is to be great in resolve, yet impotent of power ; to have the aspirations of a god clogged by the hesitations of an

idiot; to dare all things, to do nothing; to pant for emancipation, to die a slave; to long for immortality, for even a brave opportunity to pour out the life blood that courses through the heart, in a bold, manly, open war, yet to be doomed to sneak through contention with a concealed dagger and a proscribed rifle. I often think, if I had attended more to the schoolmaster—should I be able to understand these things better than that poor fellow there, who is attached to me and my sad fortunes by an animal instinct rather than by any other cause. What if, after all, Louis, we have been but dreamers of dreams."

Lawrence, soothed for the moment by his own words, walked to the entrance of the outer room, but Murtogh was gone.

"He went up," said Louis. "I saw him steal off as he always does, with the stealthy step of a cat."

"Say rather with the step of a slave," observed Lawrence, in a changed tone. "Before Heaven, Sir, there's no man, woman, or child will be able to stand erect in the presence of a fellow-creature; that's what the law-makers have done for us—spoiled our carriage. Well, even a slave's grave will cover a hump as well as a straight back; only if we are to take service abroad, we must *seem* like men, at all events," and he drew himself up to his full height.

As he stood thus, Louis, more watchful than Lawrence, quitted the window and went close to the passage that led upwards, and listened.

"What do you hear?" inquired Macarthy, "voices and steps in the passage?" In a moment Lawrence drew the pistols from his belt and cocked them.

"Hush!" said Louis, softly, "it is some one not used to the descent; the feet stumble so frequently—no, that is Murtogh's growl; no two human beings can be gifted with the same peculiarity of tone; but there certainly is another—hush—it is Ellen!"

"Ellen!—my sister!" exclaimed Lawrence.

"Thank God we shall meet, and all will be explained," said Louis. "Come life or death, I care but little, so we meet once more."

"Louis, Louis!" and while Lawrence addressed his friend, he trembled from head to foot with agitation: "Louis, let me entreat, let me conjure you to say nothing of the past—to—to—" but before he could hurry forth his words, Ellen was clinging round his neck, weeping heart-tears upon his bosom.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## THE EXPLANATION.

“At last, Lawrence,” she said, “at last I have found you ; oh, how I have suffered for these moments, brief as I hope—as I must hope for your sake—they may be ; how I have longed and prayed to see you once—only once more ; to entreat your pardon, for what truly I could not help, and to see and hear that you still loved your sister. You do not look coldly on me, do not feel unkindly towards me—say so, dear, dear Lawrence!—and yet you seem strangely constrained.”

“You have not observed my friend,” he replied, without heeding her appeal. Ellen advanced to meet Louis without reserve or embarrassment ; the young man trembled violently.

“You are ill, I did not hear you were ill,” she said, in her earnest, tender voice ; “oh, it is this watching and waiting in these dull caves, with the tolling of the waves below—the anxiety—and the cruel suspense! But you will soon both be on the free sea, and in a safe land.”

“And why not go with us, Ellen?—why not?” questioned her brother, rapidly, as if anxious to quench thoughts by words.

“If it were possible that such should be the case, that your mind was changed—I mean as regards Lawrence,” said Louis ; “and that you would go with him, I would remain and wait the second opportunity, which my sister mentioned.”

“We have not yet had the first,” muttered Lawrence.

“But it’ll come to-night,” observed Murtough ; “I heerd all of it above, by one who knows, and who’s been on the watch for us, and who let on where Miss Ellen was, and who see more than one strange sailor landed—make believe looking for fresh wather eight or nine mile round *yan* point, and then rowed off again.”

“Come with us, *sister*,” said Lawrence ; “your life, if you remain, will be one of pain and persecution ; what have you to remain for—who to remain with? Come with me, we are the only two together in this world.” Ellen shook her head.

“It canot be, Lawrence! those who wish to live together happily, must think together—at least, on the more material points ; no, no, it cannot be ; perhaps you will love my memory better than you have loved myself.” She turned away to conceal her tears, and even her brother observed how much her appearance was changed ; traces of thought and care had deepened on her brow ; perhaps, so strangely are we constituted, her bodily health had gained strength, despite the anxiety of her mind, which being “firmed” and made up as to the course she had resolved to pursue, was less torn by contending feelings than it had been. Events change far more rapidly than time, fast though its flight

may be ; no woman ever changed more than Ellen ; and, still, like all noble creatures, the more difficult her position, the more painful her destiny, the greater she became ; she struggled bravely with her emotion,—which did not escape Murtogh's observation, and, with instinctive delicacy, he passed from the larger into the smaller room, and his steps were heard ascending the rugged way to the upper cliff. There was a heavy silence, which, for a time, none seemed capable of disturbing ; at last :

“ Ellen,” said Lawrence, laying his hand on her arm, “ the tide comes slowly in, and still there is no sign on the waters of the escape we looked for.”

“ They would not come—they could not come by day,” she replied, “ nor even by such light as this ; the crescent of the moon just shows, and when the night darkens, they will come ; be sure they'll come to-night.”

Lawrence made an impatient gesture.

“ If they do come at all,” he said, with an oath. “ But they won't, there will be some excuse ; friends or foes, it's all the same, they hold no faith with Ireland. I'll not stay much longer ; my limbs grow stiff and cramped for want of motion ; I'd rather die like a free man, than continue chained here, in this sea-bird's eyrie. The very silence of the place, broken only by the monotony of that treacherous ocean, is enough to drive a man distracted. We have looked over these waves, until my eyes ached ; until I fancied every bird a boat ; and I could have dashed myself against these rocks in a frenzy of disappointment, but for the weakness of starvation.”

“ But there will be no more of that, no more of that for you anywhere,” eagerly interrupted Ellen ; “ that was another stimulant to my journey here ; I cannot tell you of the liberality which has placed a power in my hands that I delegate to you right joyfully.”

“ Ellen,” he replied, “ it was not that I wanted moneyed means ; thanks to Louis—for I must do him justice—his purse has been as free to me as to himself ; but the poor creatures dare not bring us food, no matter how they desired it, lest we should be tracked. Look from that opening down upon the sands, we have watched for hours there, to cast a rope for a small net full of cold potatoes, brought—one by one—by the shrimp-boys, while fearing that the very rocks would bristle with bayonets.”

“ I can believe all that's told by old histories,” she replied, “ as to difficulties and dangers ; and though, thank God, the fever has ceased throughout the country, and they say food is cheap and plenty in the towns, the peasants fear to seek it. I left the castle at night, after—what I cannot bear to think of—in Keim-an-eigh, guided by a boy, and disguised as I am now, and the sister of Lawrence Macarthy found concealment and shelter wherever it was needed ; indeed, once when I had every reason to believe that Abel Richards suspected where I remained for three days, waiting poor Matthew's appearance, I was made aware of

my danger by the generous kindness of a gentleman I had never seen, and preserved from it;—but time is passing, I may not have moments to tell you all I desire; the wretch Richards has harrowed the country to discover me, thinking my evidence must destroy you, if there was nothing else."

"So much for the faith he has in your truth," sneered her brother, again tossed from his better nature by one of his sudden gusts of temper.

Ellen did not seem as though she heard the taunt; yet her lips trembled. She unfastened the tie of her coarse blue cloak, which, like her dress, was that of a Kerry peasant-girl, and it fell from off her shoulders.

"If you had been brave, as I once hoped you were," cruelly persisted Lawrence, "I need not have been here as I am now—I need not fly the country. *You*, without lifting your finger, could have made Richards the laughing-stock of all Ireland. Could have got him cursed by all who had breath to curse. Got him hooted out of the island. You had nothing, as I told you before, to do; nothing!—but simply to deny his statement; to deny that you saw me on that night. Who would have believed *his* word opposed to yours—who? Who would have known the contrary?"

"God," replied Ellen, in a low, quiet voice.

"Cant—pure cant," exclaimed Lawrence, stamping violently.

"I cannot endure this!" exclaimed Louis, "this is unworthy of you, Lawrence—it is unmanly. You know her nature, you know her rectitude; you know that *she* is actuated by principles of the highest honour, however unfortunate for your position it may be that *she* is so."

"I am over-fatigued—and faint," she said; "my brain whirls, I did not expect such a reception, after all. Oh! Lawrence, God—the God whose truth I honour—knows how gladly I would resign a life, thus in my early youth without one tie to bind it to the world, to render you free in this our land. But I have no power to do what you require; the knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong, is given to me, and I must do what I think right. I *dare* not sin; I have no right to pollute God's holy air; I could not do it. In an evil hour I sheltered that bad man. Yet why should I call it evil?—but for that shelter—your hand, still spotless, might have been stained—"

But Lawrence would not permit her to finish the sentence. He extended his arm, and swore by the holy cross that his vengeance should still be accomplished. In the excitement of her feelings, she threw herself on his bosom, but he thrust her from him with even more than his usual impetuosity; and then, bitterly repentant of a violence which, uncertain in all his moods, her next words might cause him to repeat, he earnestly entreated forgiveness.

It was granted with the eager generosity of a pure-hearted, high-minded woman, ready to confer an affection in recompense

of an injury. She regained her serenity more quickly than did Lawrence ; for his repentance was always bitter, and he continued to hang his head, while she pressed his hand between hers, and told how Edward Spencer had neither slumbered nor slept until he had settled upon her what he called her mother's fortune. "And this," she said, "brother, you have a right to share with me."

Again the string jarred. "No right—if the legend of the country tell truly ; I am base-born and a papist. What right, Ellen, can such have to inheritance ? You speak like a foolish woman."

But nothing could shake her resolve to soothe him whom, despite his faults, she loved most devotedly, more now when about to become an exile, than she had ever done before.

With ready tact she changed the subject, and showed how it was her loving prayer that he would *share*, at least, what she possessed—that in the strange land to which he was bound, he would need what she could have no means of spending—little, she said, would serve her here, and that little it would be her dearest delight to distribute amongst those whom she had succoured all her life ; that when the troubles subsided, the glens-men and wild dwellers of the hill would need some one who understood and cared for them, as she did ; and, at last, seeing tears stealing from beneath her brother's half-closed lids, she took from her bosom a purse heavy with gold, and placed it in his reluctant hands, which at last closed upon her gift.

"I have heard say," she observed, "that the fastest friends are made faster, by having no pecuniary transactions with each other ; but I cannot think it so. The Irish are too long dependent on each other to feel that to be true ; we do not shrink from services of love, they bind us all the faster, and you and your friend will still share with each other in a far land."

Lawrence made no reply, but at once occupied himself in perfecting the small arrangements he had so frequently studied—examining his pistols, and burnishing the mounting of his rifle ; then gazing from the window, at last he said, "How bright the moon is rising, yet calm as it is, I see no boat ; look out, Ellen ; I remember what a clear, keen eye you always had ; you could mark a plover or a partridge on the heath when I could not, and always directed me wrong ;—ah, Nelly, I lost many a fine bird through your tender mercy."

It was a memory of their young days, troubled and stormy as they were ; such memories were few, but not the less sweet.

"And the rabbits, Lawrence ; do you remember my delight at finding a spotted rabbit, and how you nursed it for me ? Look as I may, there is nothing on the sea yet, except a far distant brig—but it is early ; yonder is Cape Clear, and the light-house does not twinkle ; but it may not be so long ; and Lawrence, I wished to ask, is there no one to whom I can be kind for your dear sake—is there nothing I can do while you are away—is there no message?"

"Murtogh goes with us, Ellen; old Esther is gone; and the remains of my ancestral castle have been made a heap of smouldering ruins; do not spare help to those who followed the Macarthy; when you see Father Luke, tell him I shall never forget his advice."

"I would rather take a message to Father Duffy," replied Ellen quickly; "Father Luke has been a firebrand among the stubble; forgetting that his calling is to preach peace, he has roused up feelings that, but for such men, would slumber into forgetfulness; I cannot call such men Christian priests—men who steep the cross of our dear Lord in blood before they lift it to the multitude; there have been too many such in Ireland; may they be forgiven, but not as they would forgive." Lawrence scowled upon his sister, and fearing she had said too much, she added, "I may well be angry when his name is mentioned, for it was his evil counsel that urged you onward."

"The memory of the past still more so," replied Lawrence; "the memory of the sad past—my grandmother's last words—her advice: but no matter, no matter now: the moon is still looking down on a sea unbroken by a single oar. What can we think of it, Louis?"

"I think," replied Louis, "more of your sister than of ourselves; would that she could be prevailed on to accompany you; if my remaining could be the means of this, I would rather perish than she should be unprotected."

"No," she answered, "no! although I cannot be to you, Louis, what your disinterested love deserves, I will never, never suffer you to incur fresh danger for my sake; it is for me to remember that my wild theories first led you to peril all for what you considered my country's rescue; the enthusiasm of a thoughtless girl led you forward."

"Not altogether that, Ellen," he answered, "although it was a deep impression your loveliness, your enthusiasm, your affection for your country, made upon me when first I met you in England. I confess when I saw your beauty illuminated by your patriotism, I felt ashamed, as an Irishman, of having taken service with a tyrant; my whole soul was steeped in love for you, and I sought to win your heart by giving my heart and arm to our mutual country; I was altogether ignorant at that time of what we both know too much of now; I negotiated with the agents of discontent wherever I could discover them, and still lured onward by the promise of your approbation—the prospect of your love if I succeeded—"

"I gave you no such promise," interrupted Ellen; "I held forth no such prospect."

The words passed in a moment, in less time than they have taken to read; and Lawrence sprang from his sister's side, exclaiming, "Peace, peace! What does this matter? Of what consequence can it be? Why go back to that, these last, few, brief moments, the only moments we may have together, Louis.

She will not leave the country. Why torture her and me with this proposal?"

"But, Lawrence, this must be explained," said Ellen, calmly.

"And Lawrence can explain it," added Louis; "he led me distinctly, and repeatedly, to believe you promised, if I conquered the foes of your country, that you would become my wife."

"Oh, brother!" exclaimed Ellen, clasping her hands. "Can this be so? Was this the reason that—" she paused to collect her thoughts, then added, "But you received my letters, Louis, you surely could not have mistaken them?"

"No," he said, "I received no letters."

"Not before my illness?"

"Neither before nor since."

"Lawrence!" exclaimed Ellen, seizing his arm, "Lawrence, you surely have not led your friend onward to his destruction by misrepresenting my feelings and my views to him?"

Lawrence turned away.

"I see it all now," she said, "I see it all, and my cup of bitterness is not yet full; I see now why he would not permit me to undeceive you myself, long ago; I see now the reason why your sister, Lady Mary, reproached *me* in such bitter terms in a letter which has been steeped by my hot indignant tears, for having led you to this pass, when I knew and warned you of the hopelessness of what she said I encouraged. Oh! she did me bitter wrong!" and Ellen covered her face with her hands and sobbed.

Lawrence swore an oath so loudly that it echoed through the mysterious passages of the caves, "That Lady Mary should yet be taught to remember the injury she had done his sister."

"That comes well from you after suppressing Miss Macdonnel's letters, and leading to *my* sister misunderstanding *your* sister's noble nature," was Louis' quick reply.

"Oh! it is easy enough to turn and twist things to your own purpose," said Lawrence.

"It is you who did so; you who fooled me to my destruction; who deceived me—I might have known it."

"Do you say I deceived you?" urged Lawrence, fiercely.

"Lawrence!" interposed Ellen, while she trembled with agitation. "What do you mean?—why not at once confess the truth? You were urged by your love of the cause—that was it, nothing but that; you are good friends now—good friends as ever. It was his devotion to his country; his desire to have one he admired and loved as he did you, staunch to it; indeed that was all, Louis: and women are often sacrificed from more unworthy motives," she continued, terrified by her brother's violence, and the calm, determined aspect and quivering lip of Louis.

"Follow me to the beach," said Lawrence, without heeding Ellen.

"I'll *follow* you nowhere," was the sharp reply.

"Then lead, and I will follow; I'll cede you this, most noble captain."

"Oh, brother!—Louis!" exclaimed Ellen, making a determined effort to command her feelings; "Oh, brother! is this a time, when you are about to fly together to another land, to jar and quarrel with each other? Let me entreat you, Louis, to forbear; you always said you loved me!"

"De boat!" exclaimed Murtogh, rushing down. "De boat—one shout for de dear life—hurroo! I see her round de point—and watched de signals—de crossed oars—and all—hurroo! Murtogh's a proud man—dere 'll be plenty above to care for you, Miss Ellen!"

"Go, Lawrence," said Louis; "go—I will not voyage with you: come life, come death."

"Then Ellen goes with me," answered Lawrence; "she shall not remain to have her name blown upon by your lady sister as one who companioned you at midnight in a cave—come, Ellen."

"Shall I return de signal, Masther Lawrence?" inquired Murtogh, wild with joy at the prospect of escape. "Shall I, Sir? Oh, den—murder itself—what ails de whole of you? See how dey pull for de dear life—for liberty—and a new country."

"Lawrence!—Louis!" exclaimed Ellen, while she cast herself on her knees before them, "here I entreat you to forget the past and fly, as you have fought, together. Louis!—see you not that it was his love of the cause, mistaken as it was, that led him to deceive you. Indeed—indeed he has pleaded for you as it were for life;—it sundered us more than once, and doubtless relying on the false tales of woman's changing nature, he thought I might change also. Do not turn from me, Louis: Lawrence, look not so resolved. Oh, heavens! what curse is on this land that thus sworn brothers turn upon each other for slight cause, even at the extremity."

"It is not a slight cause," said Louis. "I can hold no fellowship with liars."

In a moment Macarthy's blood suffused his pale cheeks with the deepest crimson; his retort to the insult was a blow from his rifle, so sudden and desperate that his companion fell instantly beneath it.

Ellen did not scream, but she threw herself upon her brother so as to prevent his repeating his violence, though he had evidently no inclination to strike again. It was the momentary impulse of anger to which he had yielded; and when that was satisfied, he looked in horror at its effects.

"There again, Masther Lawrence. Oh, glory! and is it you dat must wait for us, dat have waited for you! Shall I carry de captain down, Sir, as it's past walking he is, not to be losing time and tide?" inquired Murtogh, to whom the outrage seemed a matter of course. "Faith, I'm not ashamed of yer hand at a blow, any way, only it was a quare time ye took to give it!"

"Lawrence," muttered Ellen, hoarsely, as she still clung around her brother, and pointed to where Louis lay, while the beams of the moon, as they fell upon him, rendered his features still more

ghastly than they were, and Lawrence felt her shuddering while she spoke :

“ What have you done ? ” she continued. “ Raise him up, and carry him with you ; he is your friend—your dear friend—your faithful friend ;—how still he is ! Murtogh—quick—quick—carry him to the boat ! ” and Ellen staggered towards Murtogh to compel his attention to her desire ; but she was unable to do as she purposed, and would have fallen, had he not prevented it.

“ Are you going to take *this* with us ? ” inquired the half savage ; and he lifted Ellen as if she were an infant, and held her forward to Lawrence, who had now knelt down beside Louis, and raised his head from the ground : then looking from the window, he said,

“ Hurry, Masther Lawrence, for de love and honour of ould Ireland ; sorra a taste of use it will be to hurry, if you don’t do it at once ; don’t take on at all about de captain, sure it isn’t a clip like dat would harm him, it’s only stunned he is—sorra a more. I wonder at you, Masther Lawrence ! ”

But Murtogh’s words were unheeded, anxiety for Louis had taken possession of Lawrence altogether.

“ Quick, Murtogh, ” he replied, as he drew his cloak beneath Louis’ head. “ Quick, bear her down first ; we will all go together ; bear her down first—and then we will return and carry him.”

“ Aisier said than done, Sir, ” observed his foster-brother, “ it’s not her weight that would hinder me, but the passage is so narrow ; you must go first, lifting her on, and I’ll follow ; don’t seek to rouse him, Masther Lawrence, for God’s sake till after we get him in de boat ; he’ll come quick to himself den—fast enough—one would tink yerself never had a bit of differ wid a gentleman before—to see how much ye take on about this.”

“ I cannot leave him until he speaks, ” said the impetuous Lawrence, again flinging himself on his knees beside him. “ I cannot—cannot leave him until he says he forgives me.”

“ Why to be sure he does ; he gave you de lie, and you wiped it out—and quick too. A Macarthy take a lie, from a half Sassenah ? think of it yerself, Masther Lawrence.”

“ Yes, that is true, ” said Macarthy, rising, and wiping away the drops that agitation had scattered upon his brow ; “ yes, that is true, he did give me the lie—he called me a liar.”

“ Devil a surer ting, Sir, ” replied Murtogh ; “ and now, just lift her along so, if you mean her to go.”

“ Had we not better take him down first ? ” said Lawrence, hesitating.

“ Just lave him asy, dear, for a minute or two, and he’ll come to himself de quicker ; oh, murder intirely to see how you go on, never minding, and de very waves below marking de minutes.”

Lawrence made no further reply, and in a few moments they had carried their light burden into the little sand bay, where the boat sheltered beneath the shadow of a rock. The motion, and

action of the air had in some degree revived Ellen—but not to perfect consciousness. She moaned, and turned her head; but her brother held her close to his bosom, and urged her to confidence, in his softest voice; while he lifted her into the boat, Murtogh stooped down and whispered something to an oarsman, and apparently not satisfied with his reply, repeated his words.

“Is this a time to mutter?” exclaimed Lawrence, “is this a time to mutter when there’s work on hand?—fetch in that cloak!”

Lawrence was in the act of stepping on shore to return for Louis, when he was seized by both arms from behind; instantaneous and unexpected as was the act, he resisted with his usual bravery, and after a moment’s struggle was again free and on shore; he had drawn a pistol from his belt and aimed it at Abel Richards—whom he recognised standing at the steerage—when the coward seized and held the struggling Ellen before him, so that if Lawrence had fired, his sister must have received the contents of his pistol; this movement compelled Macarthy to drop his weapon, and Richards took advantage of the pause to fire: the shot told; Lawrence reeled and discharged his pistol at random; Ellen’s shrieks were echoed by the caves, and in less time than it has taken to record it, Lawrence was dragged into the boat; Murtogh had been previously overcome by numbers, but Ellen burst from Abel Richards’ hold, and wildly questioned her brother as to where he was wounded.

“Not much hurt—not much hurt—not much, Ellen, not finished by *him* at all events,” was the reply.

“Now, boys, push out—for the Lord has delivered more than we expected into our hands,” said the voice of Abel Richards.

“Stop,” exclaimed Ellen, “and listen, before you dip oar in water: under the canopy of heaven—where nothing hinders my words from ascending to the throne of Him who sees, hears, and judges all things—do I denounce you, Abel Richards, as an ungrateful hypocrite, forgetful alike of your promise, and the peril from which I saved you. You stand there, now, the murderer of my brother—confident of triumph—and yet you are as like to be betrayed to a hard death before sunrise, as those whom you have marked for destruction. I never felt that I could curse till now; and even now pray, that the curse my heart in its anguish registered against you, may—not be fulfilled.”

Lawrence looked astonished at her words, and Abel Richards shrank from them, muttering that what he did was in pure self-defence—nothing more.

“We ought to search the caves,” said the sergeant, who had accompanied the civil power.

“No backing—no delay,” replied Richards, who cared for no victims that could not be sacrificed to his own purpose, “on at once. Do you not perceive?—are your understandings darkened? We heard there were three, and three are delivered unto us—truly the Lord is gracious!”

Murtogh lay in a heap like a snared animal, glaring around

him, while so close did the soldier who considered him his lawful property, hold the bayonet to his throat, that every heave of the boat caused it to prick him. Lawrence was secured by two, who tied him to themselves, and Ellen's words subsided into convulsive sobs. Richards affected a show of sympathy for the "dear young lady,"—according to his usual phrase,—"thus mercifully plucked from the burning :" he addressed to her sundry sentences, and at last attempted to cast his own cloak around her, saying the night was cold: but with right womanly indignation she sprang to her feet.

"Touch me not!" she exclaimed, "touch me not, neither at sea or on land. Hypocrite! blasphemer! you think your prey is netted; you think to convict the brother through the sister's lips—that sister to whom you owe your life—but your time will come, your punishment arrive. You have urged on justice with the same whip that you, and men like you, have lashed the people to insurrection. But why should I speak to you at all? you have conquered for a time as you have lived—by treachery. But why should I speak? your time will come!"

"Treachery," repeated Lawrence, and he spurned at Murtogh with his foot; "if people are betrayed, there must be a betrayer, and none but Murtogh knew the hour and the signals."

"Me, Masther Lawrence, me!" exclaimed his foster-brother, "you could not mean it, Masther Lawrence, you surely could not mean it!"

"No, no," said Ellen, with ready sympathy, "he does not mean it; don't let it hurt you, Murtogh, he does not mean it."

They were now clear of Shell Bay, and Lawrence cast his eyes for the last time along the line of cliffs that had afforded him shelter for so long a period; his despair did not prevent his thinking of Louis, and the arrow rankled still more deeply in his heart, while he recalled what Louis must think of him when he revived; for a moment, he regretted that he had spoken so unjustly to his foster-brother, but all his efforts to think of any thing merged into bitterness at his own position; in this thought, even the anguish of his bodily pain was forgotten—trapped at the moment of escape by Abel Richards.

The night was one of the purest beauty; the boat, with its freight of human passions and interests, bounded onwards, under the steady strokes of the sturdy rowers—leaving in its wake a stream of quivering silver. They kept sufficiently near the shore to note every headland and point, and all the giant fastnesses of the superb coast stood boldly forward, with the huge mountain—Mount Gabriel—as a background towering to the heavens. Frequently did Ellen look back towards Shell Bay, and her keen sight discovered a boat in the distance bearing towards the land; the next moment it was perceived by others; suddenly the rowers were commanded to stop, and a brief consultation took place, as to whether they were to proceed, or to attempt to seize those whom they had forestalled, and whose purpose was to frustrate

the ends of justice. It seemed almost certain from the suspicious movement of the boat, in connexion with known circumstances, that the purpose of those who sailed in her, was to carry away from the shore the persons who were now prisoners. But when a suggestion was made that they should return and receive more certain assurance, the proposal was opposed by Richards.

"I am bound to act as you direct, Sir," said the sergeant, addressing Abel Richards; "but I think we can hardly answer for not having a tug with them yonder, rowing into Shell Bay as boldly as we did ourselves: surely, we had better row back."

"Let us leave them to Almighty justice," replied Mr. Richards, in his usual sanctified tone; "let us leave them to Him who knoweth best; we must not bend the bow too strongly, my good friend, or shoot our arrows at random, seeing we might slay the innocent; it may be that these poor people are only kelp gatherers."

"At this hour, master?" said the sergeant, sulkily. "No—no—they are those we have foiled; and seeing they are his majesty's enemies—sworn foes—conspirators—insurgents—disturbers—"

"Beware, my good friend, of attributing motives to those who may be better in the sight of Heaven than ourselves," interrupted the arch hypocrite; "verily we know not what we say; yet is your zeal commendable, and of good loyalty—we will forward."

Now the sergeant entertained a thorough contempt for Abel Richards, whom he knew to be a coward, and reading his fears rightly, continued, "The prisoners are quite harmless, Sir," he said; "there is no fear whatever of rescue where we land; and it is a sore pity not to have a shot at such buccaneering, rascally kidnapping scoundrels."

Abel Richards heaved a sigh heavier than the swell that passed beneath their boat, and lifting up his hands as if in prayer, replied:

"My heart is heavy for you, my good soldier, for seldom does the heart of flesh beat beneath a scarlet coat. Why should we seek to slay where we are not sure? Alas! is it not grievous to me to have been forced, by the offended laws of my country, to do this thing to a neighbour's child! Onward, boys—dip your oars—and put your trust in the Lord for your safe voyage."

"As you please, Sir," answered the sergeant; "but you have been so anxious to catch these, that I thought you wouldn't mind a little more trouble to net others, who are quite as bad."

"I wish you would learn a little more Christian charity, and not impute bad motives, but think kindly of all men," said Richards, sharply; and then added, "As there are surely some voices amongst us, suppose we raise a hymn to pass away the time; there is no knowing how a word may find its way, even at the eleventh hour!" and after a few "hems," he began; but no voice united itself to his; it "crackled" a few stanzas through the air, and then ceased, leaving the boat's company and their unwilling freight in deep silence on the mighty world of waters.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE AVENGER.

THE boat continued its almost noiseless course in the full beams of the full moon ; the sky above, as clear as the water beneath, and no passing cloud veiling for a moment the sober magnificence of the heavens. Ellen's thoughts were for a time absorbed by anxiety for her brother ; she could form no idea of the nature or extent of the injury he had received ; her inquiries were replied to by monosyllables ; only once he asked her for a shawl, which she gave, and he thrust it into his bosom. She watched his every movement, and derived consolation from observing that no sigh or moan escaped his lips—that he sat not only erect, but was more than commonly calm and quiet ; yet he contrived to evade her inquiring looks ; once, indeed, when she took and pressed his hand, he murmured, in return, “ My poor sister ! ”

It was the instinctive tenderness of a moment, and as quickly passed ; then she recalled their last interview with Louis, and hoped her fears had exaggerated the danger he had undergone from the passion of Lawrence ; and she prayed that those who had been sent to seek them in the lair they had so rashly abandoned, would seek and find him. It was evident that Abel Richards, having secured his principal prey, cared for little else ; or that he only knew the *number* of those concealed within the cave, and was unaware of Louis being one of them ; it was certain, that they had only expected to capture three—and this they had accomplished.

Lawrence continued to maintain a sullen and determined silence ; no one would have supposed that he “ suffered,” in the usual acceptation of the word. Murtogh muttered occasionally in Irish, until commanded to be still by a voice he had never disobeyed. The captors were as silent as the captives—with the exception of Abel Richards, whose exultation knew no bounds ; it seemed inclined to assume many shapes—now bursting forth in chosen texts of scripture, then finding voice in song, or rather psalm.

Notwithstanding that she took no notice whatsoever of the observations he addressed to her, he would utter expressions of interest, esteem, and good-will for Ellen Macdonnel, which forced her brother's hands to tingle, and his heart to swell almost to bursting ; then he would revert to the past, and with admirable skill in torture, speak to the spy—who crouched like an animal at his feet—of the various matters that were sure to rankle in the bosom of Lawrence Macarthy ;—such as the apportioning of particular land ; the removal of stones from one of the Macarthy castles to rebuild his pig-sties ; the doom which had been executed on two “ rebels,” convicted of participation in some late affair on

the borders of Waterford county. It was really surprising how he could continue in the tone of voice which had so completely disgusted Edward Spence on board the steamer ; to whine forth oily sentences of cruelty, freighted with torture to the feelings of the unhappy prisoners, managing—so nicely were they timed—that not even the dip of the oar should cause a syllable to be lost ; —at one moment, chuckling over a successful ruse ; at another, blasphemously chanting forth his “gratitude” to the Almighty : “Truly, the sun is permitted to shine alike on the just and on the unjust—until the end cometh, when all will be made clear.”

It was evidently intended to run in the boat, where there could be no chance of rescue—close under a coast-guard station ; and where, if any tumult arose, a siege could be maintained ; it was evident, also, from a peculiar light seen far out at sea, that the outlaws were looked for there.

Lawrence, to whom every foot of the coast from Cork Harbour to Cape Clear was perfectly known, remembered how deep the water was at either side of the narrow peninsula they must pass to reach the shore, and which jutted from the base of the proud headland, a natural and most picturesque pier ; the coast-guard had rendered the almost perpendicular ascent from this “pier,” to the cliff-head, more secure by cutting steps, fixing posts at convenient distances, and connecting them by a rope ; the pier itself was tolerably broad—broad enough, at least, for two persons to walk abreast—and though washed over at high water, it was by no means as “slippy” as might have been expected. No boat could have approached beneath the promontory, but for this freak of nature—casting her rocks into the heaving ocean, which, in the calmest times, rolled with a mighty swell beneath. As they drew near, the boat was lifted silently upon the crest of the intermediate wave, called emphatically “the death wave,” and then descended so rapidly into the trough of the sea, that Ellen raised her eyes to the solid-looking mass of leaden-coloured water with an hitherto unknown feeling of terror ; the sensation was quite new to her—as it must be to all, who, for the first time, mount and sink upon this awful swell.

The lurch of the boat threw Abel Richards closer to his prisoner.

“Young man,” he said, “I would not see you delivered up to the avenger without an entreaty that you would humble yourself by penitence and prayer, and it might be that a door would open by means of divine grace, so that even at the eleventh hour you might be saved ; I do not mean saved for the nothingness of this life, but for eternity.”

If Abel Richards could but have seen the look of indignant scorn which replied to this counsel he might have been silenced ; he noted but the impatient gesture of the proud head, and the brutality of his nature prompted him to continue :

“You must surely see the hand of a directing Providence in this, delivered as you are into the power of the merciful laws

against which you not only rebelled but incited others to rebel. You cannot be so blind as not to observe how, at the moment when escape was within your grasp, when the very boat that was to convey you to liberty was on the waters, you were delivered over to justice—yea, even in company with her, your own sister, by whose testimony you will be convicted, unless she is intimidated to perjure her soul for your sake; though," he continued in a tone of mock commiseration, "there would be no use in it, for there is abundant evidence against you, yea, truly abundant to hang a score of Macarthys."

Still Lawrence replied not. No Indian warrior ever endured insult with greater dignity; nor did Ellen, to whom he had the coarseness to appeal more than once, take more notice of his words than if they had been murmurs of the sea. Richards was too intense a tyrant not to feel exasperated that any living creature, his own peculiar victim more especially, could possess a power beyond that which he enjoyed; and he persevered in his endeavours, but still in vain, to provoke retort.

Frequently the boat neared the shore, and as frequently it was considered necessary to urge it back from the fulness of the swell, and because of its being more deep in the water than they desired, in consequence of the augmented number it contained.

With the malice of a demon, Richards spurned Murtogh, where he still crouched, utterly crushed in heart by the cruelly unjust words his foster-brother had heedlessly uttered; and while doing so he asked the sergeant if *he* would sanction the casting such a "carcase" overboard a little before its time, adding that "God forbid he should mean it otherwise than in jest, as the tender care of the law provided that no such popish sinner even as Murtogh should perish without benefit of trial, time, and prayer."

But despite all these little "playful" observations on the part of Richards, the night waned slowly, and the rowers declared it would be half-an-hour or maybe more before "the turn of night towards morning" enabled them to land.

Abel Richards had frequently partaken of and distributed what was deemed in those days necessary to "keep up the spirits" or to "stimulate exertion." Its effects became gradually more and more visible; it had for some time swelled his exultation into insolence, and while it thickened his articulation rendered him more lavish of his words; disgusting at all times, the drink rendered him even more so than usual, as with breath heated with liquid poison, he uttered prayers and imprecations at the same moment. Ellen raised her eyes to heaven and then fixed them upon the beacon light and the irregularities of the cliffs; she fancied that her wearied body and over-wrought mind conjured a vapour into a vision, but as the boat heaved, she saw gliding from the pier—gliding smoothly and without effort over the pointed crags—the same figure with hooded head and outstretched arms, the very figure which years long past she had seen crossing the river on the memorable night when her aunt and Madam

Macarthy breathed their last. She watched the apparition gliding through mid air, its cloak floating behind it, the arms raised ; up—up—and then—that was no freak of her imagination, for it roused the attention of her companions on the water—a shrill piercing scream ; another—that made Lawrence start ; his eyes glared and his cheek flushed ; and Murtogh shuddered, uttered a suppressed groan, and hid his face ; while Abel Richards instinctively crossed himself upon breast and brow—the habit of his early days reviving with all its ancient force during the brief moment of terror.

Again the shriek was heard ; but fainter—and from a distance.

“Lawrence!—my brother—Lawrence!” exclaimed Ellen in a tone of anguish. And she cast herself on her knees by his side.

“It will be soon over with me after *that*, Ellen,” he murmured in reply ; “but it makes me sure of one thing ; the Banshee never cried for a base-born Macarthy.”

Murtogh roused himself—sat up—and said, “Thank God for it!”

“There’s the first gray of morning,” observed the sergeant, after a pause, “and the lull came over the waters with the scream of them sea-birds. Row, boys, row, three minutes will do it now—steady.”

“The sea-birds!” stammered Abel Richards, with a thickened utterance and a triumphant chuckle, determined to do away with the impression his involuntary action might have created. “It’s not s—s—sae-birds.” He lifted his hat with half-drunken gravity, swinging from one side to the other. “Gentlemen—as I was going to observe—it’s a case of de-ci-ded blasphemy to call it the voice of sae-birds!—cock sae-birds up, with such (as the poor benighted sinners call it) an *ullagawn* as that!—not it, indeed! Brethren!—I am of a meek and merciful disposition ; and though it may be a sin, it’s the wakeness of my nature to be merciful—that sae-birds!” He clasped his hands together. “No—it’s the screeches of Papists, howling in ——!”

But before he completed a sentence so fearfully in accordance with the brutalising theory of his latter days, the boat reeled violently ; it could hardly be said there was a struggle, but two men rolled rapidly and heavily into the dark, deep waters, that swelled and fretted, and splashed ; and the waves closed above them as the boat shivered and then regained its position. A low cry of mingled horror and astonishment burst from some of the men, while others seemed as though struck by lightning. Lawrence, with natural bravery, made an attempt to spring in after them, but he was unable to accomplish his purpose, his guards at either side preventing it.

“It is Murtogh!” sobbed Ellen, “I saw Murtogh seize him ;—there, there they are—merciful Heaven!”

“Back the boat—give me that oar!” exclaimed the sergeant, who, having barely tasted the spirits, was by far the most collected of the party.

By the gray light of morning, Richards saw the effort as he wrestled for life, and his arm, still full of strength, was extended to clutch the oar flung to him. But again Murtogh dragged him down, and the bubbles floated heedlessly away. And now the whole party was effectually aroused: all suddenly sobered—and all anxious to save. "Here they went down," said one; "Look there!" exclaimed another; "Farther to the left!" said a third; "They'll be dashed to pieces on the Mermaid's bed!" exclaimed a fourth; and deep and earnest fragments of prayer, mingled with such words, and the flinging forth of a net and an oar, during those dreadful moments.

"Look!—in the froth of the little wave," whispered Ellen, as she clung round her brother.

"Masther Lawrence!" shouted Murtogh, and though only *one* head was seen, it was evident the struggle was not ended. "Masther Lawrence—am I a *traitor* now?"

Again and again the boat tacked, and once an arm waved as if in triumph, and then there was neither sound nor shadow on the sea, save of the creeping morning.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE LATEST STRANGER.

It was not until Lawrence had fainted in his efforts to mount the cliff, that his sister became aware of the extent of the injury he had received. He was tenderly borne to the top by the sergeant and one of the boat's crew, and laid upon the soft mossy grass which crowned the rock, just as the rising sun sent a flood of glorious light over the ocean.

"He is not dead," said Ellen, in reply to the inquiring looks of those who bent over him, while her hand was pressed upon his heart to note its beatings. "He is not dead—not yet; I know he will not, cannot die yet."

No tear moistened her cheek, or dimmed her eyes. As usual, the greater the anxiety and the difficulty, the more collected she became.

"Is there no one among you," she inquired, "who can bear him in and see to his wound? and is there no one to do me a message to Mr. Spencer of Spencer Court?"

One of the coast-guard expressed himself well skilled in gunshot wounds, and those who rode for commands to head-quarters, and to convey the intelligence of what had occurred, offered to bring a surgeon, and, if permitted, to take any letter so far on its way.

Ellen wrote—but the ready wit of a son of one of the boatmen suggested that he should tap at the window of the room where she sat by her brother's side, while the outside guard had gone away for a moment.

"Leave any line you really want to go to Spencer Court, Miss Ellen, and I will run with it in no time over the mountains. God knows when what he took will get there if ever it does. I know you well, Miss, though you don't remember me. I had a quarter with Master Mat once, and have been a poor scholar since, working my way to be a priest, maybe, if I don't lose my vocation; but drop it just into this fine bed of nettles under the window, and I'm off like a wild hawk. You do not mistrust me, do you?" inquired the boy, while she hesitated to reply.

"Indeed, I do not."

"Then, trust me, whether you want or not, that I may do something for you, and gain another step to Heaven."

Ellen's great cause of anxiety, next to her fears for Lawrence, was for Louis, and she desired most earnestly to communicate with Lady Mary O'Brien about him; she hoped he had been taken off by the boat, but it was possible this might not have been the case—and then what would be his fate? For this purpose, she anxiously desired to see Edward Spencer; but the delay was an evil she greatly dreaded; in the letter formally transmitted, she had written guardedly, but now, in a few earnest words, she communicated her desire, and the watchful, grateful boy was soon on his way over the mountains. The sergeant stated his belief, that the ball was lodged under the skin; but as the hemorrhage had abated, he thought it best to await the arrival of the surgeon.

Lawrence rather slumbered than slept, upon the low iron bedstead whereon they had placed him. Ellen thought she had never seen him look so beautiful; the rising fever had sent its hectic before it, and though the features had a painful expression, they were in repose; the full round Celtic forehead was shadowed by his clustering hair, and his strong hands lay motionless and manacled on his breast, which occasionally heaved, as with intense, yet suppressed pain. Helpless as he was, they deemed it necessary to guard him well and watchfully. It struck Ellen as rather singular, that, after her messenger's departure, the watch without passed and repassed the window at stated intervals, while another seated himself in a corner of the room, so as to see, rather than be seen. Once or twice, Lawrence moaned so heavily, that Ellen sank on her knees by his side in involuntary prayer. One of the most natural and holy impulses of our regenerate nature, is to appeal to the Almighty in all cases of difficulty and distress; those who think rightly, know that the omnipotent, all-guiding, and all-seeing power is ever ready to hear supplication; and were it only in the hope that such supplication gives to the trusting spirit by whom it is framed in all the humbleness of faith, its reward is great. While she prayed, Lawrence opened and fixed his eyes upon her.

"The last time," he said, "that I slept, and you watched, it was not thus;" and he held forth his chained hands towards her. "I wonder," he said, again, after a long pause, "I wonder what they mean to do with me;" then, again, while Ellen filled and

refilled the cup with the cold water he so eagerly drank, there was a long silence; at last he murmured, "Have you heard——"

Ellen recalled him to himself, by pointing to their guard, and while one of his bitter smiles casts its shadow over his face, he inquired, "If they had yet found poor Murtogh?" Never once did he complain of the anguish that sent alternate drops of heat and cold to his brow, until his hair became heavy and moist; he only asked for air and water, and once expressed a hope, that if he did not get better after the ball was extracted, he might have the consolation of a priest.

It would be impossible to convey an idea of the sensation which agitated the county to its very centre, when the events of that memorable night became generally known. The frightful end of Abel Richards, though by means unlooked for, was at first believed to be one of the romances which have existence only in the imagination of a people ever ready to turn the unreal into the real; and the facts, terrible as they certainly were, received additions in their progress from lip to lip, each story being more wonderful than the last; some representing Ellen Macdonnel as drowned, others declaring that Lawrence had jumped out of the boat with Richards, others whispering that the old serpent whom St. Patrick had "laid" centuries ago beneath the brimming ocean, had arisen, and seizing the middleman, despite the efforts of the boat's crew, bore him at once to depths which he was doomed to inhabit for ever, with those whose sins were unrepented of. The facts, when really ascertained, sent a shudder through the country, and created a degree of interest for Lawrence Macarthy, which, under other circumstances, could not have been excited. Every peasant-heart throbbed with sympathy for Murtogh; the people perfectly *felt* and understood the wild heroism which devoted him to death to revenge his foster brother's injuries, and rid himself of an unjust suspicion; while the improbability of the whole incident served but to increase the sensation which spread rapidly throughout the country. As the day passed on, the strongest excitement prevailed in the immediate neighbourhood, and the usually solitary cliffs were crowded with people of all classes and degrees. Soldiers, conceived necessary for the preservation of the peace, mingling with the coast-guard officers and the peasantry,—it was deemed more prudent to place a strong guard of military round the station on the cliff to which Lawrence had been removed from the boat, than to attempt conveying him through the country while in its present state of ferment. The peasantry, who had been skulking in the mountain fastnesses ever since the failure of their project at Keim-an-eigh, suddenly and numerously reappeared. The more respectable class of farmers also bestrode their stout horses, and rode towards the coast. The people of Cork, excited by the singularity and multiplicity of the rumours that reached them, never too much occupied not to attend to the smallest matters of news, became, as it were, the creatures of a new existence, and assembled along the high roads, expecting every moment to see the cloud of

dust that was to herald the prisoner's arrival, if, indeed, he were permitted to be borne so far towards a gaol. Popular excitement, quivering on the very verge of tumult, was at its height, and the strongest sympathy for Lawrence Macarthy sprang up among those who had never before regarded a Whiteboy in any other light than that of a midnight ruffian. Individuals of the less "liberal" party recalled some of the darkest pages of their country's history, and remembered that the Macarthys were once a great people ; that the "poor young man" had been left all his life "to run wild," and that certainly Abel Richards "was not what he ought to be ;" that such men stir up all evil passions, and excite—if they do not create—tumult, by the very means they take to suppress it ; that a long continuance of injustice and cruelty practised by one member of a body, is unfortunately considered to be sanctioned by all ; and that though Abel had long been scorned and avoided by the gentry, still no open and decided demonstration had been made against him—nothing to prevent his being identified as one of their party—for they acted with him, and his being of "their party" was the only reason why much he had done was passed over ; while people whispered to each other, "Well, what can we do ? if we degrade him, if we expose him, if we hold him at bay, after his conversion, what will be said, but that we have betrayed one of ourselves ; we abhor him, but we do not think, *for the sake of our party*, it is wise to say so." Thus the generous re-action which, despite all party and prejudice, will sooner or later agitate every heart, when once the chains of bigotry are even a little loosened, caused an under current of sympathy, unknown and unacknowledged, to move throughout the land ; and this was not a little increased by the affection borne to Ellen Macdonnel, not only by those who knew her, but by those who had heard, or even imagined they had heard, of her many virtues. Conjectures as to what she would do and say, hereafter, found vent from every lip ; and while some declared that her brother was mortally wounded, and would never live to take his trial on the strength of the depositions Abel Richards had sworn to, others expressed their conviction that her truth would be put to the severest of all tests, in the course of a few days ; if, indeed, "the people," that undefined but always mighty power, did not effect a rescue, or if some fleet or ship, coming they knew not whence, did not bear him off the coast.

In an inconceivably short time, after the manner of Abel Richards' death had become known, boats of all sizes and shapes were seen hurrying over the still unbroken calm of the waters ; from every fishing village and little port they came, freighted with human beings anxious to seek the bodies committed to the deep in so singular but so awful a manner. These boats, so well suited to brave the swells of the fitful waters, and the sudden gusts of wind that rush down the ravines of the rocky shore, moved with a rapidity hardly in accordance with their ungainly and heavy forms ; and long before the sun had set, there was a regular line

of communication between the people on land and those at sea ; deeps were fathomed and creeks swept with nets, to which at intervals stones were attached to make them sink the deeper ; for many hours every effort was useless ; they gathered nothing from their toil but fragments of stones, clusters of sea riband, and once or twice some small fish became entangled amongst the meshes of the nets.

The evening was as calm and beautiul as the one preceding : it was so close and fervid, that after sun-set, at intervals, the clouds opened and emitted what the peasantry call " silent lightning." There is something very mysterious and grand, particularly at sea, in this noiseless illumination of the heavens ; in an instant the mighty dome is rendered resplendent, you catch the immense expanse all in bright light, and as instantly all again is calm and gray, with only the pale, sickly-looking, crescent moon, or a star twinkling here and there, or " winking " behind the passing vapours, while the waters beneath, that at the same instant reflect the brightness, are again spotless as before. But though the evening was closing in, the people rather condensed than dispersed, and many talked over the injuries they had received from Abel Richards. They clustered together, and inquired why, if the body was found, it should be permitted Christian burial ? why it should not be cast forth like the carcase of a dog—heaved from the pure waters to blacken in the sun, or remain until the wind and hail battered it to atoms ? They built a funeral pile, high up, of his evil deeds, and, placing him thereon, danced in imagination round it, as many there had done, about the smouldering ruins of his once home. Not one but had some deed of wrong to tell, some memory of cunning, or injustice, or harshness practised towards the widow or the fatherless to repeat —some addition to make to the catalogue of crimes that mounted to the blue arch of the star-lit heavens.

The soldiers bivouacked more closely round the coast-guard station, and the peasantry seemed determined to watch and wait ; prepared for some event, they knew not what : after a time they became unusually silent, so silent that even Ellen could hear the boats hailing each other, or exchanging sentences with those on shore, whose patience seemed inexhaustible ; there was none of the usual hum and murmur that rises and floats above a multitude ; they felt that a great sacrifice had been offered by the hand of one of their own class ; that the most cruel, persevering, and insidious of all their " hard-fisted middlemen " had been destroyed in the very fulness of his triumph ; but the triumph they would have felt, and, perhaps, expressed, at such an event, was checked almost to its dismissal, by the fear that Lawrence Macarthy had received his death-wound from his hand, and that after all, Abel Richards had died a conqueror ! The clan-feeling prevailed to such a degree amongst them, that the self-sacrifice of Murtogh was for the time overlooked ; his dark, sullen, and unsocial nature had prevented his being popular amongst his

fellows, but he would not have murmured at this if he could have known it ; he was certainly an Irishman in his foster-love and silent devotion to a cause, but in his other qualities it would have been difficult to trace in him much of his country. And so it generally is with the multitude ; those who make the greatest sacrifices are frequently forgotten or over-looked amid the tumult of evil, but popular, agitators ; so much of that same popularity depending upon accident, while he who follows up that accident is so frequently hailed as the creator of an event—made rather for him than by him. Before the night closed, a surgeon had extracted the ball, and told Ellen that all depended upon the brother's being kept quiet : and what a fearful “*ALL*” it was for that poor girl to think of. Lawrence's fever had increased, and, much to her astonishment, his delirium did not partake of the nature of the more recent and dark events of his life, but wandered back to the scenes of his childhood. To remove him, the surgeon had said, would be certain death ; alas ! she too well knew that his life would be prolonged only to meet death. More than once the idea suggested itself to her—if she could escape, was there sufficient evidence for his conviction ? and yet, could she leave him now ? The only relief she experienced was in prayer ; again and again she prayed ; when her brain burned and her eyes refused to shed tears, she prayed ; and as time passed, full of the beautiful trust which the high in mind and pure in spirit possess in each other, she watched and listened, knowing that, in this extremity, neither Dean Graves nor Edward Spencer would desert her. One of the most elevating and enduring of all our merely human feelings, is the trust which in affliction the human heart has in the sympathy and affection of those it esteems or loves : it approaches nearest to the *HOLY*, of all we experience during our lives ; it is a realisation of heaven on earth ; but it can be experienced only by the pure in spirit !

Still the people did not disperse. The boats seemed determined to renew their search in the morning ; for they anchored by twos and threes in the sheltered bays, while the peasants continued watching on the shore ; and Mr. O'Driscoll, who lived near the spot, was as much on the alert as the youngest magistrate in the county. The force was sufficient for every purpose, if any outbreak had been intended, and he could only *hope*, with the officer in command, that if the bodies were found the people would separate : they hoped this, though they scarcely expected it.

According to the moon's rising it was past ten, when a tall, gaunt woman, completely shrouded in a long blue cloak, her face muffled in a handkerchief, and the hood of the cloak drawn closely around it, asked to speak with Mr. O'Driscoll. When she was admitted into the sort of kitchen where he was seated, conversing with the young officer, she said, “I must see you alone.” The officer, casting a look upon her closely enveloped form as he was about to leave the room, jestingly said, “she was a beauty in disguise.” The woman turned abruptly round, and, though her

fleshless arm quivered with age or infirmity, she threw back the hood. He never forgot that face; it was, in its extreme old age, both fierce and firm; every wrinkle was as a record of passion or suffering; and the perfectly white hair looked still more blanched when contrasted with the deep-toned brown of the withered countenance. The young man muttered, "God bless us!" and hastily closed the door.

"Who are you?" inquired Mr. O'Driscoll.

"One you have not heard of for many years, if ever you heard of her," was the reply. "I am the mother of Abel Richards."

"God help you!" exclaimed the magistrate in a kindly voice. "Indeed I have not heard of you for many years, and then it was said, I fear, that your son treated you very badly."

To this the woman made no reply; saying only—"I have found him."

"Found what—the body?"

"Yes—the body—his body—my child's body—there are two—you can see them as they lie in the clear water. I have watched over him all day. No one thought of looking down between them two rocks—they must have struggled in there—and the easy tides, though they lifted them up, did not lift them out. Murtogh of the Strong Hand lies upon his breast—but Abel's face is upwards:—Sir, I want my son's body to lay it in the grave; but the people will not let me have it; they would tear him limb from limb."

"Do they know where it is?"

"No, I tell you," she replied hastily, "light-footed men spring over the place, but they never think of looking down. I knew he was coming to the coast-guard; I heard it; I waited two whole days—just to get a sight of him as he passed; and then they said he was dead!—I strayed down alone (for I have lived unknown and alone, hard-by, for more than twenty years), and I sat down watching the slow moan of the waves—just on a point of the rock at the back of where the boats land; and no one minded the lone old withered woman rocking to and fro—to and fro—nor knew that she was thinking of *his* wealth, and his hardness, and his scorn, and his power, and how the salt sea was washing over all!—and praying hard to the Almighty to keep the curses off him at the last. And when I thought how cruel he had been to me, his own mother—I knew I was doing wrong at such a time; and then I called to mind the days he was a baby at my breast—and then the tears rained down my face, dropping into the water by my side. Oh, blessed Virgin!—they were falling over what they fell for!—for down in the depth of water staring up at me—was my own child!"

"But, my good woman, we must have these bodies removed," said Mr. O'Driscoll.

"I want my child's corpse," she replied. "I want to lay it in holy ground—that's all I want. I know what he was—but he

*was my child!*—if they will let me take him away—it's all I ask in this world—but they won't—I know they're waiting to tear him in pieces."

"You do them injustice; at least I think so," said Mr. O'Driscoll—"they are very wrathful against his memory—more particularly, as I fear, Lawrence Macarthy's wound is worse than we expected, but still, they could not refuse a mother the body of her child—besides we have men enough to prevent any violence."

"That's what you gentlemen always say, when violence is going to be committed," she replied, in better terms than he thought she could have used. "Whenever you are going to use violence, you talk about preventing it. I would not have a shot fired, or a bayonet drawn. I would rather sit and watch him day and night—if Murtoagh's grip was off his throat—than have a single stone thrown."

Mr. O'Driscoll was greatly moved by this mother's appeal. Abel Richards, it was well known, had most cruelly deserted her: and this caring for, and watching him, when his remains would have been outraged by the people—this love, the last beating impulse in her withered heart—struck upon his own.

"My poor woman!" he said, "I do feel for you very deeply, but I hardly know how to manage; it is impossible," he continued, "to do any thing secretly; and though I might read the Riot Act—"

"The Riot Act!" she interrupted, and threw up the window which overlooked the spot she had described, and from whence in the bright moonlight could be seen the people in crowds upon the strand; "there is no riot—I have thought, since I came into this room—I am an aged woman now—almost fourscore years old; now, Sir, if you would tell them who I am—if they would only think what I have suffered, maybe the Lord would move their hearts—many there would remember me, and they'd let me have my dead quietly."

"In the morning it shall be done," said the magistrate.

"It's a long time till morning," answered the old woman, "and Murtoagh's grip on him all the while! and I to sit alone on the rock all night, watching, and looking down into his awful face; and, maybe, a high tide to rise and wash him away in spite of me!"

Mr. O'Driscoll took his hat, and, after saying a few brief words to the officer, desired the woman to follow him to the beach. The descent was difficult for one of his enormous size, but he accomplished it. He was well known, and much beloved; for though violent in his politics, he had never ejected a tenant, or, despite his hard and noisy words, ever done a "hard thing" to a poor family. Rapidly a crowd gathered round him, all making inquiries about Lawrence Macarthy; he hesitated in his replies more than usual, and then quietly questioned, in his turn, as to the chance they had of finding what they sought; and, strangely

enough, they told him that Murtogh's mother—the half-insane wandering woman—had been on the strand, but they had got her away, by inventing some tale about the tides setting in for the Bay of Kinsale, which sent her off in that direction. Mr. O'Driscoll followed up the tone of sympathy thus created, and inquired, if they had ever heard of Abel Richards' mother. Many had—and all seemed inclined to feel for her—and then, after a few more words, he said, "She is here."

It was an experiment upon Irish feeling: the poor woman trembled violently, but, after a few moments, she recovered sufficiently to address a few words to them in her native language. She told them what she had told Mr. O'Driscoll, and asked them, if they would give her her son's body without insulting it. Every voice answered, "Yes;" there was at once a forgetfulness of everything but the mother's prayer. They raised him tenderly from the waters, and laid his head upon his mother's lap—not without wondering, why she so wept! and words of kindness were lavished upon her with all the overflowing abundance of Irish sympathy with affliction.

"God bless them!" grumbled Mr. O'Driscoll, as he puffed his way up the cliff; "they'd have torn him in pieces a while ago, and just see how their hearts are melted by the words of an old woman. I love them all—every one—I do—the Rapparee Scoundrels! their warm, and generous, and natural impulses—*when they're let alone*—make one proud of THE SOD."

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE CLOSE.

THE letter which Master Mat had given to Mr. Spencer was from Lady Mary O'Brien, expressing her belief that Louis had escaped to the coast, and inquiring if it was known where Doyle was, as he would be certain to know "*his*" movements. Edward pondered over the letter, and was somewhat astonished, upon self-examination, to find how little the clear reading of a simple riddle had added to his happiness. He was certainly highly gratified by the confidence she reposed in him; by her frank and even cordial expressions; by a more than half-hinted reproach concerning the knowledge she had acquired that he believed her capable of encouraging one lover, while her hand was "in some degree" pledged to another: but he saw that with her, every feeling was absorbed by anxiety for her brother's destiny, now, more than ever, clouded; every interest possessed by her or her father was at work to get him out of the country, and into another quarter of the globe, and she hoped that his final escape was provided for. She knew that if he could make his way from his then concealment to Shell Bay, there was every

prospect of his being taken off the coast, and means were not wanting to hoodwink many as to his movements.

Edward found himself engaged in internally protesting, even more strongly than Dean Graves had ever done, that Ellen had not beguiled Louis into the strait in which he stood. He could (for there was a similarity of pursuit in his case) understand the love he felt for a lovely woman interesting him in her country's destiny. He knew that this might have led him to any effort; but he felt so much pain in believing what Lady Mary still asserted, that Ellen had actually encouraged Louis as a lover, and was secretly working to rouse the country to rebellion, that, in the reply he addressed to Lady Mary, he became absolutely chivalric in her defence. When Edward and Lady Mary met, it was evident she still believed that Ellen had been the fatal light that had betrayed Louis to desertion from his regiment to follow an *ignis futuus*. She said that her brother had over and over again confessed that Ellen's love was promised as the rich reward he should obtain, if their cause in the West became triumphant, and she assumed that he had known this from Ellen herself; it was in vain that Edward vowed it to be impossible! Lady Mary maintained her opinion with the obstinacy which women sometimes substitute for strength, and Edward in his own mind, for the first time, thought her hard and unamiable; but this was a too bitter judgment. Her anxiety for Louis; the knowledge that her aged and noble father was on the verge of insanity, and that her youngest brother had caught the enthusiastic feeling from the expiring torch; rendered her severe and unjust towards one more than worthy of her friendship, but whom she did not know sufficiently well to understand. Nay, she cast forth one insinuation, which Edward was instantly able to repel. She said she had no doubt that Ellen, and Lawrence, and Louis, had shared the same shelter, both before and after the gathering at Gougane Barra—a want of generosity and womanly faith that moved him much.

While Edward Spencer was returning from his interview with Lady Mary at the Dean's, it must be confessed he fell into a sort of reverie, as to whether a man would be happier with a woman of spirit, who had seen the world, or a woman of sentiment, whose sympathies had been called forth at an early period of life, by acquaintance with the sorrows, rather than the sins, of her fellow-creatures.

Mrs. Myler had declared that "Mr. Edward was a charming young gentleman, rather silent, but very good." He continued, despite events that would have disturbed the equanimity of any less earnest than himself, not only to make plans, but to carry them into effect; already he had given employment to many who ventured to be seen, and at an increased rate of wages—which drew upon him the displeasure of some of his neighbours, and the blessings of others. He had not yet had experience of the effects of industry, but he found the people ready to work, and grateful

for employment. Mrs. Myler exceedingly rejoiced at the prospect of good drainage, for when the river rose, sundry of her offices were under water. She spoke of "Scotch farming," and "the North," whenever she had an opportunity; and if she could have discovered what had become of her "darling Miss Ellen," she would have been in a state of greater satisfaction than she had experienced for a length of time. She quite rejoiced in the quietness and good order of "her young master," and became ten times more precise and particular than she had ever been before. After the lapse of some days, the account of the death of Abel Richards and Ellen's captivity threw the poor woman into a state of agitation impossible to describe; and though Mr. Spencer was booted and away within a few moments after he received the letter Ellen had despatched from the coast-guard station, yet he hardly rode fast enough for the old housekeeper's contentment. "He was a good young gentleman," she said, "but he was not as quick as the gentlemen used to be."

Certainly there was one more swift than he—for whom Ellen was summoned in the earliest morning-watch from the ravings of her brother's fever.

Lady Mary O'Brien and Ellen Macdonnel had met as girls, both proud according to their feelings and stations. Lady Mary bright, eloquent, sparkling, witty, and conventional, with a deep, noble heart, but a heart neither so devoutly true nor so essentially tender as that of Ellen Macdonnel,—Lady Mary loved her country, and what was still better, the people thereof; but she laughed *at* them as frequently as *with* them;—while Ellen, at all events of late, felt her heart beat and her cheek flush if any one turned them into ridicule; their sorrows had in her estimation sanctified even their follies. They had met as girls, repelled by each other's pride, for there is nothing the proud can so ill endure as a demonstration from another of the quality with which they themselves overflow. Lady Mary had done Ellen injustice, and she had of late begun to fear that such was the case; she had clung to the belief that Ellen had been grievously to blame, until she almost hoped (unknown to herself) that such might be the fact; it was possible, nay, it was natural; she would have been glad to have her self-reproach removed by anything that confirmed a prejudice—few in the world will acknowledge this, but it is not the less a truth.

Lady Mary O'Brien and Ellen Macdonnel had, we have stated, met as girls, and parted, neither feeling any inclination to know anything more of each other, and yet unwilling to believe that such was the case. When liking depends on the "trying to like," on reasoning affection into activity, it rarely succeeds, and if an opportunity of meeting did occur, both seemed, as if by mutual consent, to avoid it. So, when Ellen was summoned from her brother's side, and entered the outer room, of what for the time being was her prison, she was for a few moments unconscious that they had met again, as women, experienced, in the very flower of their

young lives, in sorrow and disappointment; strangely enough united in purpose, that of preserving each a brother; and yet suspicious of each other, as women not unfrequently are until some action or word, or even look, changes the always rapid current of their thoughts and feelings.

"You remember me, Miss Macdonnel?" said Lady Mary, taking her hand. "Surely you remember me?"

"Now, perfectly," was Ellen's reply, "but I did not at first; my brain is so bewildered, my eyes so full of horrors, that for a moment I did not know you."

Lady Mary paused; she was struggling for composure, and achieved it at last by an effort as violent as it was painful. "My brother!" she said. "I am in a state of agony about my brother. Can you tell me anything of him? He has not been taken, *that I fully understand*; but has he escaped? Is there a chance of that? Oh, misery! I should endure less if he were dead before me!"

"You may think so," answered Ellen solemnly, "but so it is not; you do not know what it is to watch the coming of death as I have been doing during the last hours."

"I *have* known it! God help me, there are few sorrows I have not known," answered the young widow; "few indeed that have not pressed upon me."

"Sorrow makes us selfish," replied Ellen, "sorrow makes us very selfish; but there is much difference in watching the departure of a beloved object when no shadow but that of death rests upon his brow; you look as though that were the darkest as well as the last of all earthly sorrows; but you are wrong, there are deeper and darker shadows than those which are cast by death."

"My brother!" said Lady Mary.

"I hope, and think, he is safe," replied Ellen; and then she described how they had descended to the boat leaving him behind, how they had been at once seized by Abel Richards and his party, and how she had seen the boat, doubtless intended for their preservation, rowing towards Shell Bay after they had left it.

Lady Mary was so excited by hope that she made no inquiry as to the reason *why* Louis was left behind; but Ellen felt that much as the disclosure of the whole truth *must* cost her, that disclosure must be made. This unhappy business, she said, had created various, and most miserably contending feelings in the minds of their brothers, and at the moment when the boat hove in sight, which they believed was to convey them to liberty, they had quarrelled, most bitterly, and Louis was rendered insensible by her brother's violence.

Ellen was violently agitated while she spoke; her limbs trembled, her lips frequently clung together, and her voice was faint and tremulous; but Lady Mary might, perhaps, be forgiven under the circumstances, for not observing this—her brows gathered, and her upper lip, always either imperious or witty in

its expression, became fixed, while her bosom heaved, and she drew her breath painfully.

“And this then is the end of his sacrifice for you and yours,” she said firmly but at intervals; “this was the termination—this the end—enslaved by you, inveigled by you—”

“Lady Mary, you forget yourself,” interrupted Ellen, her spirit roused by the untruth even more than by the insult, “you quite forget yourself, this is unjust; there was, as I have written you, no inveigling. I wonder you could use the word *to me*; I cannot, for a moment, defend my brother’s conduct; it cannot be defended, it was utterly and unpardonably violent, and grew unfortunately out of this very subject. Alas! alas! Lawrence was woefully to blame from the first; for he knew how cold my feelings were towards your brother, and yet, in his zeal for success, in his eagerness to retain his influence for his cause, he led him to believe I favoured an affection which I thought my own communications must have quenched long ago. I little thought my letters never reached him—poor Lawrence! he was misled by his own blind zeal, by his impetuosity; but he is punished.”

Perhaps Lady Mary hardly heard her words, certainly her expression was in no degree softened towards Ellen. “I shall go mad!” she said at last. “It is night, and detention would follow discovery, yet I am strongly tempted to go at once to Shell Bay. Oh, Father of Mercy! to think of his being left to perish like a dog, by him whom he so laboured to save!”

“There is every chance of his being saved—of his escaping now,” said Ellen; “if he had descended the beach with us, he must have been imprisoned with us.”

“Repeat those words,” said Lady Mary, catching her arm, “repeat them.”

Ellen did so. “It is true!” she said, breathing deeply, as if a great weight had been removed from her mind. “It is quite true. Providence works mysteriously; I see it now clearly. If I have done you injustice—”

“If!” interrupted Ellen Macdonnel, turning away as proudly as Lady Mary could have turned. “If.”

“I have done so; and yet, I feel as indignant at your scorning my brother’s love, as I should have done at your urging him to his destruction. Is not this strange?”

“Not if I had scorned it, which, God knows, I never did. There is no scorn in my heart, but for the vile and worthless, and well you know he is none of these.”

“I have heard,” said Lady Mary, “I have heard much of your high honour, and your love of truth. Will you, can you forgive me? I cast from me, and utterly disclaim the evil surmises which my own evil judgment suggested—I am ashamed of myself. I confess this now, humbly and sincerely;—if we had met—all would have been cleared long since; but you avoided me always, you always shrank from me.”

“The pride and coldness of Lady Mary O’Brien,” replied Ellen

—and then astonished at the tone of severity in which she spoke, she paused, and to amend her words, endeavoured to recall them. “The pride and coldness attributed to you—by those who think rank, and beauty, and pride inseparable—prevented me. I was always a fortuneless, and of late have been almost a friendless, girl—dependent upon a self, which has been rendered miserably weak by circumstances—and now—a prisoner—watching a prisoner’s death-bed!”

“No—no,” said Lady Mary, affectionately; “all things will yet be well—each word you utter, convinces me of my own unworthiness; I cannot look at you and hear you without being weighed down by a sense of my own unworthiness—I cannot breathe the air you breathe, without feeling that all Edward Spencer said of you was true.”

Ellen was standing close to the candles that were burning on the table, in the room which had been vacated to enable Lady Mary to meet her, as she entreated, alone. Lady Mary had, even while speaking, observed the death-like paleness of Ellen’s features; but the instant she named Edward Spencer, a bright glowing blush overspread her face, and arose even to her brow. The deep, keen, inquiring look with which Lady Mary regarded her increased this confusion, and she turned away murmuring, that, if her ladyship would excuse her, she would go to her brother.

“But say that you forgive me, first. Do not leave me, distracted as I am by the uncertainty of the fate of one I so dearly love, and reproached by my own conscience for injustice to her who deserves my thanks, not my reproaches.”

Before Ellen could reply, Mr. O’Driscoll craved permission to enter. He told Lady Mary he had done what he ought not to do, in permitting her to have so long an interview with a prisoner, and he must remind her, that the time she had requested had expired. He added, that the schoolmaster, the half-witted schoolmaster of Spencer Court, had been waiting some time outside to see Miss Ellen; that really he did not wish to be harsh, but it was difficult to deal with ladies and idiots. At any other time the ladies would have smiled at the classification; but their hearts were heavy.

Ellen urged what harm could happen from her seeing Matthew for a moment, and that if Mr. O’Driscoll thought it right, she would do so, either in his presence, or in the presence of whoever he wished to appoint.

The old magistrate looked earnestly into her face, smoothed down her hair with his huge hand, and twisted, as in reverie, one of the glossy ringlets round his finger, then again laying his hand upon her head, he bade God bless her, and quitted the room, leaving the door open.

The next minute Matthew rushed in, and almost cast himself at her feet. “My blessed child, my darling Miss Ellen, I have found you once more, though they say you are a prisoner, but

there's no chains on you, dear ; and the poor Macarthy ! Oh, jewel ! but my heart is heavy ; and you, Lady Mary, I gave the letter you intrusted me with, long ago, into Mr. Spencer's own hand, I did indeed ; and the country says when you're mistress of Spencer Court they hope you'll be as good there for the poor, as the one they hoped would be lady there for many a year to come."

" Matthew ! " interrupted Ellen, in a tone not to be misunderstood.

" Oh, dear ; well, I should not say it, sure enough ; she's a noble lady, and wanted to pay me for taking a letter to Spencer Court the other night ; but I don't like new money, it's a great temptation."

" Have you anything to say to me, Matthew ? " said Ellen.

" Nothing, dear, only to look at you ; and to know if they'd let me sit in the room with Lawrence ; and, darling, sure I'm just come from the Shell caves."

Both the ladies started, and Lady Mary shut the door ; but it was instantly re-opened from without.

" And what did you see ? " inquired Ellen, with forced composure ; for Lady Mary could hardly breathe—much less speak—but clung, pale and panting, to Ellen, for support.

" I tracked you there, dear, and kept on, and got down to the inner cave, by the pass the sea-king made when he imprisoned the poor Kathleen in the cliff."

" And saw nothing, I dare say," said Ellen, looking at Matthew, significantly.

" Oh, not so ! " he replied, forgetting his sorrow, and seeming as gleeful as a child ; " not so, there's signs of hid treasure in both caves, and in the windings ; I examined well, for it was broad day."

" And that was all you saw ? " said Ellen, in an almost faltering voice.

" 'Deed was it ; what else was there to see ? I thought you were in it still, and would not believe but you were ; and I searched every corner, and called, and the echo gave the fool's answer, repeating my words—'deed did it. I thought there were a few spots of blood on the floor, but that must have been my fancy—for it was on the shore below the lamb was seized by the wolf ; there's a fable about it in a book !—many a time, dear, you read it on my knee ; can you remember the name of the book, Miss Ellen ? you ever and always had a wonderful memory."

" And so, Matthew," persisted Ellen, with marked emphasis, " we were *all* gone, before your arrival."

" Though I tramped the country after you night and day, the Lord, he knows ! But they can't harm you, jewel, can they ? You had no conspiracy ! they can't hurt nor harm you, the Lord above would not suffer it ! But my mind is often dark in things ; there were ever so many people creeping about the bay like

hunted animals—poor, half naked creatures—and they would have it there were two boats ; yes, 'deed would they. The first, the false ; the second, the true. Oh, dear ! if you had but waited for the second—but the false took the heaviest freight, for the true carried away only one gentleman. And how was *that*, Miss Ellen ; I can't understand it ; but *that* was what they said."

"Ay, and true enough," growled one of the men without the door to another, "for Pether the Peeler never waited to see if his friend and patron's body would be found, but swore that their fine drill captain was still in the caves, and off he went with some of us ; but that bird was off before he got near the place."

Ellen felt Lady Mary leaning more and more heavily upon her ; she had fainted. When she recovered, Ellen was again beside her brother. Nothing could exceed the respect which was shown Miss Macdonnel. From the surgeon's report in the morning it was evident that Lawrence Macarthy's hours were numbered, and excepting that every effort was used to induce him to confess the names of his accomplices, he was left almost alone with his sister ; he became more collected and suffered less, but continued to evince the same reckless disposition to the very last. When pressed as to the papers known to have been in his possession, he looked towards Ellen and said, "She has them."

"*Had*," was his sister's calm reply ; "I destroyed everyone of them with my own hands."

"Did you read them ?"

"Certainly not. How can you insult me by such a question ?"

"You may believe her," said her brother, "you may well believe her ; not to save my life, though I am sure she dearly loved me, would she tell a falsehood ? Poor Nelly ! She is unfit to deal with a treacherous and lying world."

He gloried far more than was seemly even in speech, in the end of Abel Richards ; he almost seemed to forget that to him he owed his death, in the satisfaction he felt at the knowledge that he fell in his hour of triumph by the means of his low-born foster-brother ; and yet he shed tears, tears soft and gentle as a woman's, at the loss of Murtogh. He rose in his bed and uttered a few words of grateful prayer, when Ellen whispered to him the escape of Louis, and told her if ever she met him again to say that he asked his pardon, and believed that some of his after thoughts were right ; and then he grew fierce and impatient and strove to arise from his bed, and when the movement caused him such pain that he became insensible, Ellen persuaded them to remove the cruel handcuffs ; yet when restored, as if in disdain of the indulgence, or displeased that she stooped to ask a favour, he lay still and silent—awaiting death in the very prime of his youth ; while Ellen, the heroine conquered by the woman, failed to restrain her tears, and was thankful when the priest's arrival caused her to withdraw.

The confession of a Macarthy was never quickly made ; and yet

when Ellen returned, although much exhausted, her brother still endeavoured to restrain his words. He asked her if she could sing one of his favourite melodies, naming "The Minstrel Boy!" She tried, but her voice faltered, and at last failed altogether. He then impatiently desired her to repeat the words. Matthew had been permitted to come into the room, and was seated on the bench of the open window, through which the sea-breeze poured refreshingly. A book rested on his knees, but he could not decipher a single letter it contained.

"Shall I sing it?" said the schoolmaster, and with his wonted absence he began a Latin hymn.

Suddenly Lawrence exclaimed, "That's it! Raise your voice, Domine, that's it.

" ' And plumes in the gay wind dancing  
 . . . . . dancing  
 To the flames—  
 And the wail of the fatherless,  
 All dancing over the Whiteboy's grave.' "

They were his last words; the next Ellen heard were from the lips of Edward Spencer.

"Do not weep, Ellen—*dear* Ellen—I will be to you a brother!"

The people without soon learned that Lawrence was no more, and Matthew was permitted to inform them of the precise manner of his death; they had faith in all he said, for they knew him incapable of deception.

For a time they clamoured loudly for the privilege to "wake him," after the custom of his house, but it was not considered right to grant this request, though they were told he should be buried in the grave with his ancestors: *that* had been granted to his sister.

This gave them some satisfaction, and their feelings found vent in the wild "*Ullagawn*" which passed rapidly from lip to lip, some chaunting as they departed, others lingering on the cliffs and on the beech, until the boats' crews took it up, so that the sea echoed the sorrow of the land; they hardly knew how to contain their grief, for it was deep and sincere, and mingled with their mourning there was also some consolation:—

"The wild flower is withered—the young eagle fallen!—the last of his race taken from us! there is no longer a branch of the tree that once cast its shadow over tens of thousands of acres; and the young deer, the lambs, and the herds, have no shelter, nor the native birds a leaf whereon to hang their nests!

"The wild flower is withered—the young eagle is fallen! but vengeance rapid as lightning followed the traitor's ball, and the foster brother did his duty at the last. The ocean closed above the destroyer, and his soul had no time for prayer!

“But thy soul waited in its beautiful temple till the pardon was given and the blessing was said ; the Macarthy escaped from his enemies—his hand was free on his death-bed—and the ocean sent its breezes through the open windows to cool his brow.

“The wild flower is withered. The young eagle is fallen ; bright were thine eyes, son of an ancient race ! Whiter thy skin than the blossoms of the sloe—sweeter thy breath than the breeze over the hay-fields in a valley of sunshine.

“Thy large heart beat strongly in a noble bosom, and thy step was firm and stately, last of a long line of princes !

“The wild flower is withered—the young eagle is fallen—the last of thy castles is a blackened ruin. There is none left of thy name, for the gentle dove that folded her wings over thy head is not the child of thy father, though she called thee brother. She deserves our love, for she loved us in our sorrow. She is a pulse of our bleeding hearts, and still more for thy sake do we love her !

“The wild flower is withered. The young eagle is fallen !—but he fell on the wild shore, his breath passed from him on the cliff’s high point. The eyes of love resting upon him.

“And his people were without to cry his cry, heedless of his enemies.

“Ullagawn ! ullagawn !!

“The great soul rises on the great cry of his people.”

The cry only grew fainter as the people dispersed, resolved to honour his funeral. Hundreds passed the house where the mother of Abel Richards sat alone with her dead, and they frequently paused, uttering curses deep but low—low from respect to the feelings of the bad man’s mother.

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### THE RETROSPECT AND THE PROSPECT,

WHICH THE WRITER HOPES MAY BE READ.

MORE than ten years had elapsed since the grass had been green over the grave of Lawrence Macarthy ; and though brief the period may be, in a nation’s history, many and great changes had taken place—in the neighbourhood of Spencer Court more particularly : strangers who visited the locality, and desired to compliment it, said it was “exactly like England”—“quite English ;” only there the meadows were of a purer emerald, and Nature was more profusely bountiful ; while the peasantry, instead of looking heavy in their excess of comfort, had a cheerful, intelligent aspect ; and the children !—certainly never were such roguish, laughing, courteous, happy urchins, to be met with anywhere but there. Every small holding in the vicinity partook of the landlord’s prosperity ; there were no strong and painful contrasts—no rags and riches, hovels and castles ; all around was in keeping ; the walls even of the old churchyard were repaired,

the graves freed from nettles ; the chapel whitewashed ; the parish church furnished with a new bell and a small organ ; the fences in good order ; the roads in excellent repair, whether "presentments" had been obtained or not ; everything seemed done to promote industry : the residence itself was enlarged, and really beautified by encompassing parterres and skirting plantations ; if an objection could be made to the disposition of the grounds, it would be that they were not sufficiently extensive ; and yet there was a good-sized park stretching at both sides the river, connected by a bridge over the old ford ; nor did the proprietor shut it in against his poorer neighbours, but had given them a right of footway, which saved the mountain children a "long round" when they came to school. Ah ! the renovated and well filled school ! flourishing in more than its pristine vigour at the avenue gate, a very beehive of work and noise ; not the noise of school riot, but the quiet, humming buzz of young voices, like those of industrious bees. An intelligent man presided in one room ; and a good-tempered, yet firm-looking woman, in the other ; but it would seem that in the boys' school, at all events, there was a head-master ; not, however, present then ; for in the corner next the window, stood a dignified sort of chair, stuffed and cushioned, and on the desk before it rested some learned books—at least they looked learned, from their worm-eaten covers—and behind the chair, standing quite erect in the corner, was a peculiarly long rake, and a pick-axe, both exceedingly rusty. But perhaps there was no spot in the whole place which afforded so clear an insight into what was "going on," as the summer-house in the garden—the "Mount," as it was called. There it became evident that Mr. Spencer meant what he said, when, in answer to a question put by one of the gentry, as to why he did not throw his meadows into the park, he replied, "that he did not like the idea of gentlemen keeping WASTE LANDS in their possession, while their fellow-creatures were starving for want of half an acre ;" this and sundry other opinions caused him to be considered very "odd" and "eccentric ;" but as he kept a good table—was a keen sportsman, and a "man of undoubted honour," they confessed he had a right to his own "queer ways" with the people, although he knew nothing of the true value of his estate. Let us pause at the Mount, and look around us. Mr. Spencer had purchased the land once held by the wretched Abel Richards, and levelled the remains of his dwelling with the ground ; several clean slated cottages, each placed conveniently in its own allotment of land, had grown as it were out of the ruins—just as beautiful and fragrant flowers spring from the impurities of a manure heap ; from those dwellings which the "former Mrs. Spencer" had raised with better taste than judgment, expecting the inhabitants to value what was *ornate*, before they understood the necessity for order or cleanliness, her nephew had caused to be removed all trellice work, leaving only a porch, which in many instances was garlanded by roses. The fulness of abundance was over the land ;

although the new potato crop had not come in, the old one was not exhausted, and the earth was permitted to give forth its fruit in due season ; in many instances the people had got into a new habit—of expecting something better than a mere basket of potatoes as their midday meal ; though an Irishman attaches little idea of comfort to his mere “ feeding,” still there was something very encouraging to his wife’s industry, in being able to partake of its fruits ; something nigh akin to “ wonderful” in not being obliged to sell the pig to pay the rent. The very river appeared to flow more gracefully than of old. How the cottages had increased in number ! Some, to be sure, were not as neat, nor as well kept as others—but it is not all at once that people can fall into good ways—it takes time and patience, great patience ! Mr. Spencer had been told so much by one whose memory was

“ Still green in his soul,”

and who had lived long enough to see the happy results of his good counsel.

Instead of the wail of lamentation, which, on her recovery from the fever, Ellen had heard from the valley—instead of the death-cry caused by the pestilence—arose “ the woman’s ” song, as she sat at her wheel in the calm sweet sunshine, or the cottier’s whistle ; for he tilled his own field one day in each week, and received a day’s honest wages for a day’s hard work, on each of the other five. To have said that the spirit of insubordination was altogether overcome, that the people were as calm and thoughtful and peaceable as their English fellow-tenants on Mr. Spencer’s estate in Berkshire, would be absurd—the two nations are so different, that it is doubtful if such ever will be the case ; but they, in Ireland, had learned that their landlord really cared for them—that he wished their worldly, as well as their moral and mental, advancement, and they were not dissatisfied :—they had a stake in good order, and they were not, as heretofore, ready to run into every wild conspiracy, the “ invitations ” to which were invariably issued by misery and want. They were unceasingly occupied. Give employment and remuneration for it, and you effectually strangle rebellion.

And Ellen, where was she ? She whose heart had been humbled, and spirit softened in her childhood by the painful circumstances which overcast her young days ; who had lived with the people so as to be almost one of them ; whose clear mind had so quickly seen the difference between faction and patriotism ; whose intellect had time to strengthen amid the grandeur and solitude of her native mountains, and whose heart judged while it trembled ; who, as the sister of Lawrence MacCarthy, had a hold upon the people which no other woman could have possessed ; and who, understanding them, would have more certainly known how to overcome whatever was evil in them—and so establish whatever was good—“ where was she ? ”

She was there!—*there*, on the Mount—beneath the shade of that spacious arbour, seated opposite to Master Mat, who, but little more feeble in mind than he had been during long past years, looked in better health, and only that his chestnut hair had grown gray, seemed younger than when he sung the Latin hymn by the death-bed of Lawrence Macarthy.

SHE, too, looked more like the Ellen of childhood, than the high-souled and broken-hearted girl whom we have known amid her trials—in her time of sore strait and heavy distress.

Her face was more full—her eyes were more bright and clear—the clearness of health and intellect. She was evidently amused by the perplexity of a thoughtful-looking boy of about seven, whom Master Mat was coaxing into the mazes of grammar.

“He’ll make a great scholar,” said Master Mat, pressing his hand on his head, “he’ll make a great scholar, and do honour to *alma mater*; he’ll enter before he’s fourteen.”

“He’ll do *you* credit, I hope,” said Ellen, “for I am sure you deserve it; you have taken such pains with him—never been a ramble since he began his A B C—nor suffered him once to miss a lesson. I hope he will do you honour.”

The boy looked affectionately into his master’s face and smiled.

“That’s just the way poor Lawrence used to smile when he called me *Domine!*” said the schoolmaster. “Ah, it was a bad sign; never could learn more Latin than to call me *Domine!* but I beg your forgiveness, lady; dear! dear! I do forget so sadly, and yet I have often an enlightenment on that matter, which I should like to tell you, I should indeed, for it would ease my mind.” The schoolmaster seemed distressed.

“I shall be glad to hear any thing that will ease your mind, Matthew,” said Ellen, “but I think your pupil may as well go and meet his papa; I thought he would have been here before, but I suppose he waited for the post.”

“They shot the post once,” replied Matthew, wandering as usual, “and to be sure that Mrs. Myler was always an unjust woman, and a great tyrant. She was as angry with me about not telling her, as if I had shot the post myself.”

“Don’t say you have lost your memory, Matthew; see how well you remember that,” observed the lady.

“I heard Mrs. Myler’s keen tongue exercised on Biddy Doyle only this morning,” continued Matthew, “and, indeed, Biddy’s tongue is sharp enough, the poor thing has been so often crossed in love, that it makes her savage, and you and the master do so much for her!”

“She was very kind to me in my time of trouble.”

“Deed was she! and that’s so like yourself not to forget it, Miss Ellen, dear!—Mrs. Spencer I mean, ma’am; but Biddy’s not as well liked by many of the neighbours as she was then; she does not care much about what’s going on, or what the people debate about; ever since she and her relations have been so comfortable, she’s laid down her politics, only now and again, just to

get a rise out of Mrs. Myler. And as to poor Master Lawrence, ma'am, sure if he *had* escaped that time he would only have been a wanderer, dear, over the world, for he had *that* in him from a boy that never would have got settled or satisfied! never! come what would or what might! he never would have been satisfied; and, dear, my mind never could compass it rightly, it seemed so terrible; if he had been taken, and you to witness against him, and no one hardly but myself in the country knowing how dearly you loved him. Sure I mind the time when you used to leave all your pocket-money with me to give him, the poor fellow! and your silk handkerchiefs, and books and music; and when you got into large hand in your copy-books—words of two syllables—the copy you ever and always wrote best was ‘BROTHER;’ there never was any trouble to make you write *that*, all the letters well cut, it was like copperplate! but everything was for the best—’deed was it; the country quieted after it, not quite in the old way either, for some of the gentlemen got ashamed (seeing the fine quiet way Mr. Spencer took everything) to go rattling on as they used to do, and though they won’t own it, his fine management is a wonderful example.”

“Very true, Matthew,” interrupted Ellen, “and now I must go.”

“But, lady, stay awhile; I hope you don’t fret, dear, I hope nothing frets you!—I saw the stone you put over his grave, dear, yonder, nothing on it but

‘LAWRENCE MACARTHY,  
AGED 23.’

But ’deed it was enough. Ah! no one knew how you loved him but me; and yet you were so firm, so best; those whom the Lord loves he strengthens for all things. I have it down on the slate; with one or two things to read before you go to the North; and ’deed it is a pity to take Master Edward off his Latin; though it’s right for a landlord to be ever and always moving about among his own people—only while you’re away I’ll have a little ramble through the old places. Ah! that’s it!” and taking up his slate, he read: “‘Betty Lanagan is very sorry the master was angry about her bringing the pig into the house, instead of keeping it in the sty; but it was a young pig, and wilful, and fell off its flesh, because it wouldn’t eat anywhere only just beside the childre; but she’s got a new door to the sty, in place of the one she burnt; and as she’ll do everything to please the master for the future, she hopes he’ll forgive her.’”

“She always was a thrifless, untidy woman, Matthew.”

“She was; but her children come regularly to school, and wear sound brogues.”

“Good! If we can get them to school, the rising *must* be better than the passing génération. Besides, we must have PATIENCE, Matthew; so, for the sake of the young Lanagans, and the old motto of our dear friend Dean Graves, we’ll forgive

Betty. I wonder how long it will be before she burns the new door?"

"The weather's warm just now, dear."

Ellen smiled. "Well, Matthew, anything else on the slate?"

"Yes, ma'am, plenty. Terrence Connolly and James Duffy can't agree about the turf bog, but they came to me to say if his honour would settle it once more for them."

"Mr. Spencer has done that three times already," interrupted Ellen, "but we must again have recourse to the old motto—PATIENCE—better that than a faction fight between the Duffys and the Connollys; and as Mr. Spencer will no doubt adhere to his first decision, perhaps they may be satisfied at last."

"Martin Murphy hopes the master will let him have half an acre more land."

"I fear," said Ellen, "that will be impossible; if Martin gets half an acre more, the tenants will all want additional half acres; and there is no particular reason why he should have it; he has no claim, I think."

"He has nine children."

"Oh, as to that, Nelly Maginnis has ten, and Mary Dacey nine, and Norah Delaney eleven; if we begin to show favouritism because of the number of children, there will be an end to good order; and, moreover, Martin Murphy was very obstinate about the green crops last year, and thwarted us sadly: but patience, Matthew, patience, the poor people suffer more in having their bad habits removed than we do in removing them."

"God bless you!" said Matthew.

"Anything else on your slate, my good master?"

"No, only I had a word to say. My deputy, as you call him, is a trifle too strict with the little boys; children are but children, and this new system of national education, though a great blessing, seems to me forcing; but it may do well, only I wish he would not be so hard on the *little* boys; say a word for them, dear, do! for he doesn't mind me; he thinks I'm foolish, 'deed does he. There's little Johnny Hay and his brother Jimmy, their father spoke to me yesterday about it before he went off to the funeral."

"What funeral?" inquired Ellen.

"'Deed, just then *her* funeral; the ould ancient sister Anne, where you were once, and where I remember your entreating the master to have patience with the people."

"And has that worn-out, awful woman lived till now?" inquired Ellen. "I thought she had died long since!"

"Her life was a long penance; and she's to have no tombstone, and not to be buried with her people; only alone; not so much as a raised grave. She must have been a great sinner, or they would let their bones rest together. Old Hay won't be back till tomorrow; it's a long, long journey."

"Here's the master himself, God bless him! and the two young ladies," continued Matthew; "it's enough to set any one mad to see how the people waylay him as he comes out of his own gate,

and to see how he manages to hear just what is needful, and understands them as well as if he was born among them ; and how they bless him, and have known him from first to last as the poor man's friend. That's a notorious Whiteboy that's talking to him now."

" *Was*, you mean," said Ellen. " I suspect that, in his case, as well as in others, employment has superseded politics. He knows I know him well ; and I am more pleased to see him well-dressed and cheerful, and to visit his farm, than almost any I know. 'There is more joy'—you remember the text, Matthew."

" Ay ! " added the old man, lifting his hat ; " 'more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just men, that need no repentance.' I know it—and your religion, dear, is in hourly activity—bearing and forbearing—doing deeds of love and charity towards your fellow-creatures, because they *are* your fellow-creatures, and God's creatures as well—that's it. Oh ! that the Dean had but lived !—he wasn't old when he died—just lived to christen little Master Edward—that was all ! You'll speak to the *man* within about his system—'deed the children improve wonderful, and all the people like it ; but still I don't—'deed I don't think they give the seed time to fructify ;—it's quite miraculous how every thing goes on—steamers and Catholic emancipation (oh ! if poor Lawrence had lived to see that)—and books so cheap—and new roads—and steel pens ! but they are unnatural things—making pens out of pokers and pike-heads, as if there were no geese left in the country. Well—well ! no wonder my head's gray ! "

How long Master Mat would have " gone on," it is hard to say, for towards no one did Ellen practise more gentle patience than towards the old schoolmaster. She said his voice was pleasant to her, and there was seldom a day she did not visit him, to hear of, or witness, her child's improvement. His rambling conversation was broken off by Mr. Spencer's springing over the sunk fence.

" I have dull news for you, Matthew," he said ; " poor Father Jasper had been called away—it will be long before Blarney finds so zealous an historian, or the world a more kindly and generous spirit."

" That's true, Sir ; but he did not like my touching any of the great stones in the Rock Close ; he thought more of round towers and oghams, than seeking for treasure ;—it's very odd how men will neglect the substance for the shadow."

Ellen and Edward exchanged glances. Mr. Spencer sat down at the table in the arbour—he laid a number of letters before him.

" Shall we return to the house, or look over them here ? " he said, addressing his wife.

" Oh ! read them here, Sir," entreated Matthew. " I am going in. I am not easy out of the school when my assistant calls the juniors ; he's a worthy man in his way, a good arithmetician, and a fine hand at the pen, but he has no taste or turn for the classics

—not a bit! God bless you, Sir! I think you must be very happy when you look about you and see what you have done."

"And what remains to be done, Master Mat?"

"That's the pleasure of it, Sir, to those like you and the mistress. No heed what good you do, there's still more to be done; it's a holy exercise;—oh, 'deed! but it's the lady that would feel lonesome, if there was no one looking up to her for more help. 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver,' but to give alms is the least part of it. The Dean used to say, that the thought and the care, the patience and the sympathy, did more for the country than the giving of money. Well, God bless ye both! How I do bless and pray for you! I don't know why I should be so happy—it was only to-day I said to some of the lads of Glen Flesk, who are so grateful—but what matter what I say? my heart fills when I look at you. Now it's as true as I'm standing here! I never had anything but luck since I found the four-leaved shamrock. Yes, 'deed! the Almighty has been more than good to the old schoolmaster."

He departed, turning round more than once to hold up his hands in blessing and in prayer.

"Poor old fellow!" said Mr. Spencer; "how he idolises you; but now for our letters. I have one from Lady Mary O'Brien, Ellen, I declare you blush. What! can't you bear the thought of your old rival yet? You Irishwomen are desperately jealous!"

"My old friend, you mean," retorted Mrs. Spencer. "I never can forget the noble generosity of her sacrifice."

"It was no sacrifice, Ellen," said her husband, seriously. "She never loved me. I certainly loved her, and might, perhaps, have succeeded in making her believe that love begets love, according to the adage; but she never loved me. She saw we were not suited to each other; she soon discerned my wavering; and she saw—she told me she saw at once, how truly you loved me—now, do not turn away your head, you cannot deny it."

"I do not," she replied; and though she had been a wife eight years, her still lovely face was suffused with crimson, "I do not deny it. But this I must say, that Lady Mary found it out before I confessed it to myself. She said she was glad to get rid of you, Edward."

"And I believe her; nothing is more wearying to women than the first love of boys, and she never considered me in any other light. But read, or shall I? She is at Nice: after the usual preliminaries, she says:—

"I thank your dear Ellen for calling her youngest daughter after me, but I hope my little namesake will have a happier destiny than mine has been. Ever since my dear father's death, I seem to have neither a home, nor a *first* object. Louis cannot claim either the title or the ruined property, and my youngest brother, I fear, will take advantage of his position, and assume both—this is breaking my heart. Only think of Louis venturing to London some time ago; but he felt he was recognised, and returned to

America, ill-suited as he finds it to his tastes, and the conservatism which in his vacillating mind has taken the place of *tout pour la gloire*; the only thing of the past he does not seem to wish to forget is Ellen."

There was a pause; Ellen felt her eyes overflow, but she did not turn from her husband to conceal her emotion. Ellen had nothing to conceal, the most perfect love and harmony existed between them—

“The mutual love, and mutual trust,”

of high and noble minds.

“Dear Lady Mary!” she exclaimed at last, “I will write and ask her to come to us; she could not fail to be delighted with all you have done for the people, Edward, and with the admirable temper you have shown—the judgment—the endurance—the wisdom in not expecting too much, and understanding that there were quagmires as well as mountains in the way—but the people are improving, they want PATIENT RESIDENT LANDLORDS.”

“I consider,” said Edward, “Catholic Emancipation as only the first of a series of boons, or rather, the earliest demonstration of justice—wisely given; yet, if they had not agitated for it, it would never have been obtained. As long as poor Paddy crouched in his hovel, and ate his potato, he was suffered to do so, and die there unnoticed, as his fathers had died before him: at last, agitation brought him relief: and my only fear is, that the malcontents of a party will continue this agitation for what may be unattainable, not for what all wise, as well as all just, Englishmen, earnestly desire to give the Irish—*perfect equality*. But,” he continued, changing the subject, “here is a curious epistle from Mrs. Counsellor Hackett, who wrote me on our marriage, and congratulated me when Edward was born, wishing he might be the very *moral* of his father.”

“What is the matter with her?” inquired Ellen.

“She appeals to the liberality of my sentiments; reminds me of the ‘grass greens,’ at which you and I have so often laughed, and hints that, as ‘the counsellor is getting into years,’ and has no chance of making much—the country is so much more peaceable than in the old Whiteboy times—she would be glad if I could procure him any little appointment, where there would not be a great deal to do; and that, indeed, he’d oblige me by taking it in England, if I pleased. She concludes by saying, that as I am so instrumental in keeping this part of the world quiet, she thinks I ought to strain a point to provide either for the counsellor or her son ‘on, who got many a job in Abel Richards’ time, but nothing since I came into the property, not so much as an ejection.’”

Ellen looked pained; she was vexed that such a person as “Mrs. Counsellor” should have addressed Mr. Spencer at all. She was half angry with him for laughing at the ill-written specimen of impudence and bombast which, if he had not been

present, she might have laughed at herself ; for only under such circumstances did she remember that her husband was not an Irishman.

“There is something good, though, about poor Mrs. Hackett,” she said, in an apologetic tone, “something very kind. At the time of poor Lawrence’s death she wrote me a letter, which it was ungrateful of me to forget, even for a moment. She offered me much attention, and told me, if ever I should be in trouble, the Counsellor “would see me righted without fee or reward.” She has been a good wife to a very bad husband ; and the love of display that assisted to ruin them, is not by any means confined to her class in Ireland. We find it frequently in England ; nay, I think I could show you a specimen in your own favourite county.”

“Granted, and at once,” said Edward. “Granted ; Mrs. Hackett is quaint and amusing, and when some violent prejudice does not stand in her way, goodnatured—”

“And even when it does,” interrupted Ellen.

“No, I cannot yield that point to you,” said her husband. “Prejudice is more difficult to conquer than crime ; but it is really a high compliment to my management, that she attributes her son’s want of business to my peace-loving influence. And yet, Ellen, there have been times when, but for you, I would have abandoned the country in despair.”

“You do yourself injustice,” said his wife ; “you do yourself a shameful injustice. I cannot believe it ; I am certain it is not so. Doubtless, there are times when the strength and spirits sink ; when opposition, delay, misconception, and misrepresentation have made your hand tremble on the plough, but never tempted you to take it off. You have suffered at times from the bitterness and falsehood of PARTY SPIRIT ; suffered from the one-eyed blindness of party ; that is, you have suffered annoyance ; but it soon passed—you outlived it. And suppose it frayed your temper and provoked you, still I knew that the high and holy protection of PURE and GOOD INTENT was within and around you. It is your duty to protect and direct those from whom you derive your means ; the exchange is mutual ; the prerogative of protection, great.”

“I have said so a hundred times ; but still you remember the trouble I have had in so many ways.”

“I do, Edward,” replied Mrs. Spencer, “I remember it all ; but see how by patience you have conquered ; look at those smiling cottages—”

“All I can do, that incorrigible woman of yours, Mrs. Bracey—Miss Betty Doyle, that was—will keep the smoke in ; she says, she has never been able to see out of her eyes since the chimney was built,” interrupted Mr. Spencer ; “and here is a note from your friend, the good Dean’s eldest daughter, saying, she fears her husband will give up the green crops in despair, unless I can go over or send my steward to make the men understand them.”

“But how pleasant to have the power of making them understand ; even Mrs. Bracey, though she adheres to the smoke, has had her broken pane mended ; the other improvement will come ere long ; do you remember the last time you returned *home*, after a visit to Berkshire, how all the cottiers flocked to see the new plough and the various field implements you brought over, and how—after some delay to be sure—they constantly now use them.”

“You are always so earnest on this subject, Ellen,” said Mr. Spencer, “that it is cruel to tease you—and I will not do it again *to-day*. God knows I feel abundantly rewarded ; however many may differ from me, I believe all respect me, and I feel assured the peasantry regard me with genuine affection. My dreams, Utopian as they were, cannot all be realised ; like many others, I wanted the magician’s wand, and coveted the power of creating, as well as changing, all things. I thought all the Dean’s distinctions of Celtic and Saxon Ireland a prejudice, and considered my dearly beloved Lady Mary, as little better than a rebel—for which I loved her all the better.”

“Yes,” said the generous Ellen, “she did you good—she *combated your prejudices—and won your sympathy for an injured country.*”

“The Dean’s warnings did me good service. I have not suffered the Orange party of the North to persuade me that the people of the South are *all* violent and bigoted, nor have the Southerns so entangled me as to make me consider the Orange-men as *all* bitter and destroying enemies. I do not look forward to the time when

‘The emerald gem of the western world’

will sit on the billows like a halcyon on her nest, careless of storms ; for I hear the quick beatings of their hearts—and make allowance for the richness and variety of their imaginings—while I strive to see their reason strengthened. But I am telling you all you already know, dearest, far better than I do myself. We shall do our duty if, by exhibiting the wilful or inconsiderate mistakes, the deliberate misguidance or ruinous mismanagement, of which Ireland has been for centuries the victim—we *account for, if we cannot excuse*, the terrible state of disruption in which at times we find this lovely and loving country. Let us endeavour to persuade England to try—or rather to continue another course ; by showing the POLICY OF GENEROSITY, and THE WISDOM OF JUSTICE ; and so RECONCILE THE DOUBTFUL, OR THE SUSPICIOUS, TO THE MORE LIBERAL SYSTEM WHICH MUST BE ADOPTED IN GOVERNING IRELAND HEREAFTER.”

THE END.



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